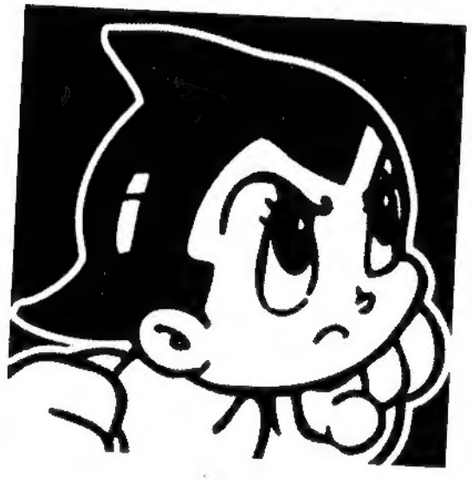
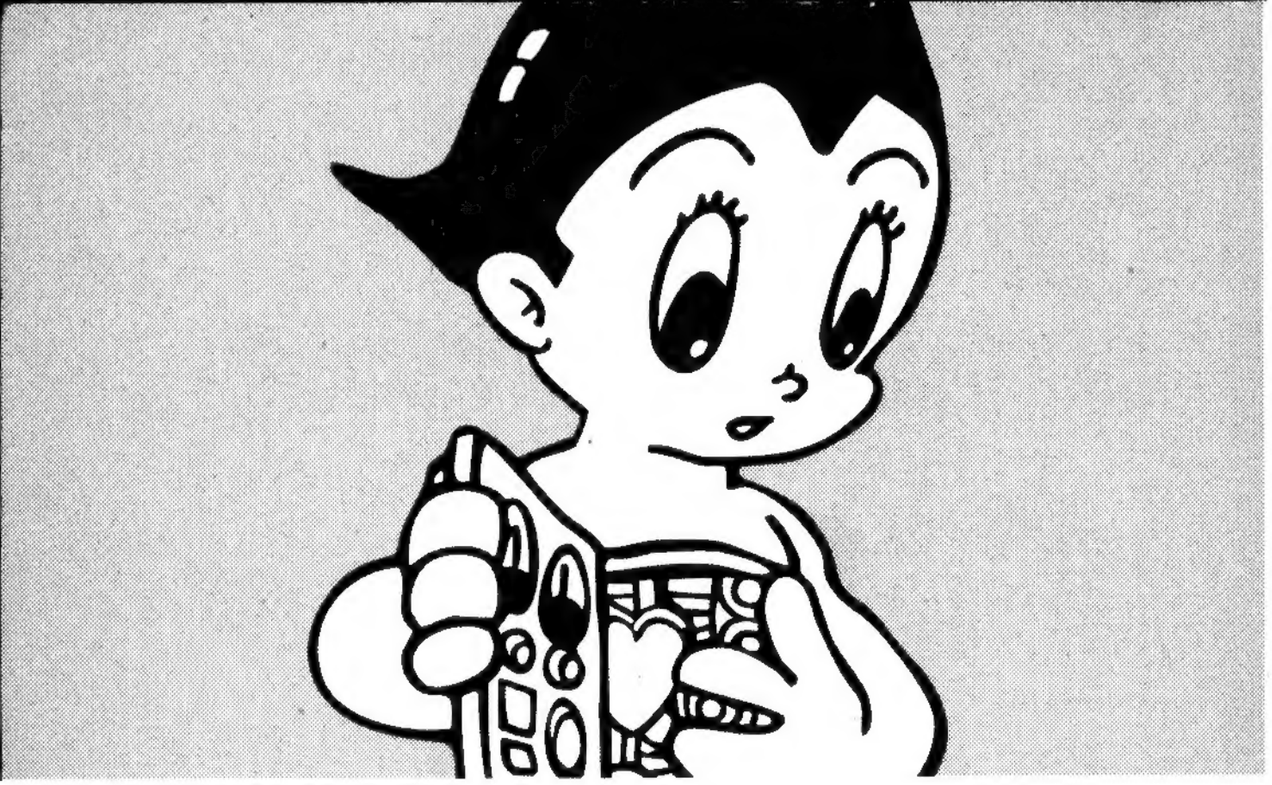

6
Osamu Tezuka's Original
ASTRO BOY





ASTRO BOY

6

by

Osamu Tezuka

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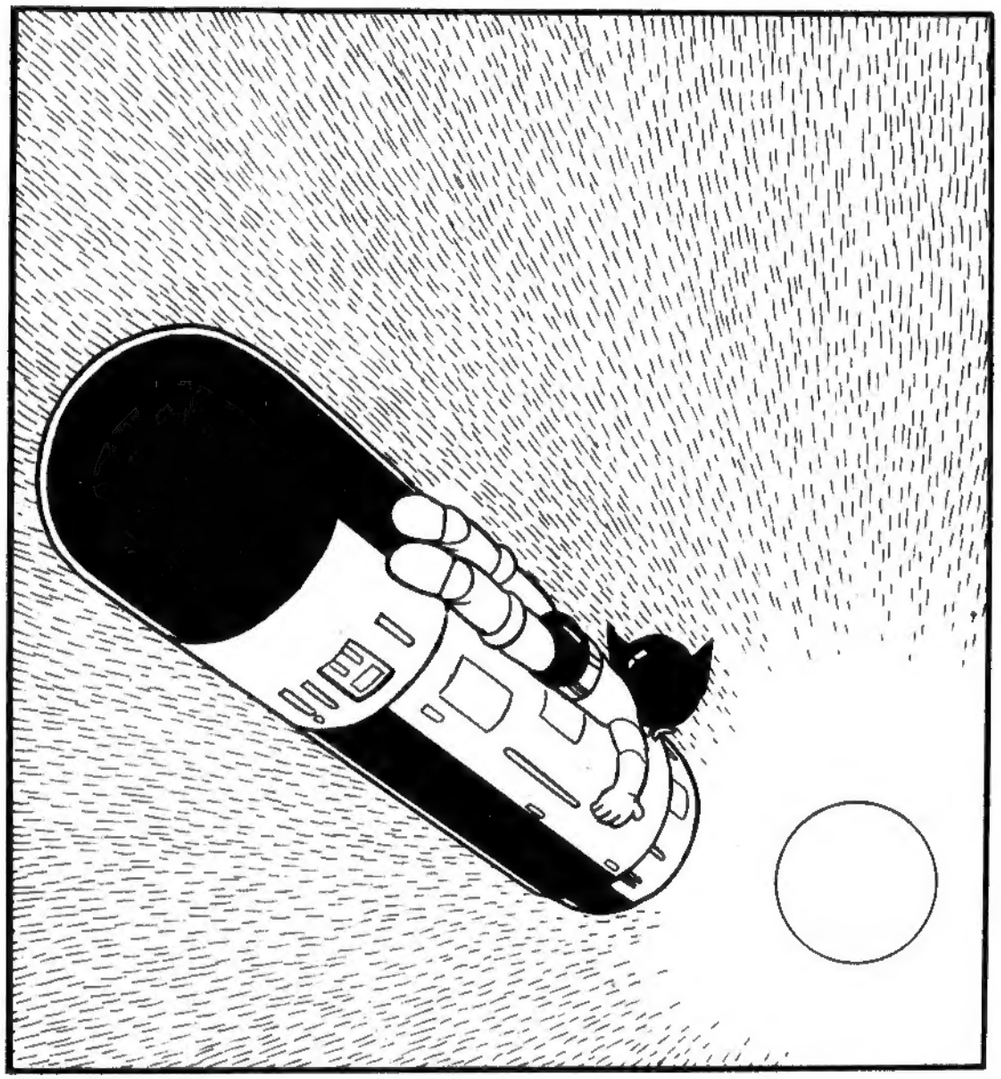
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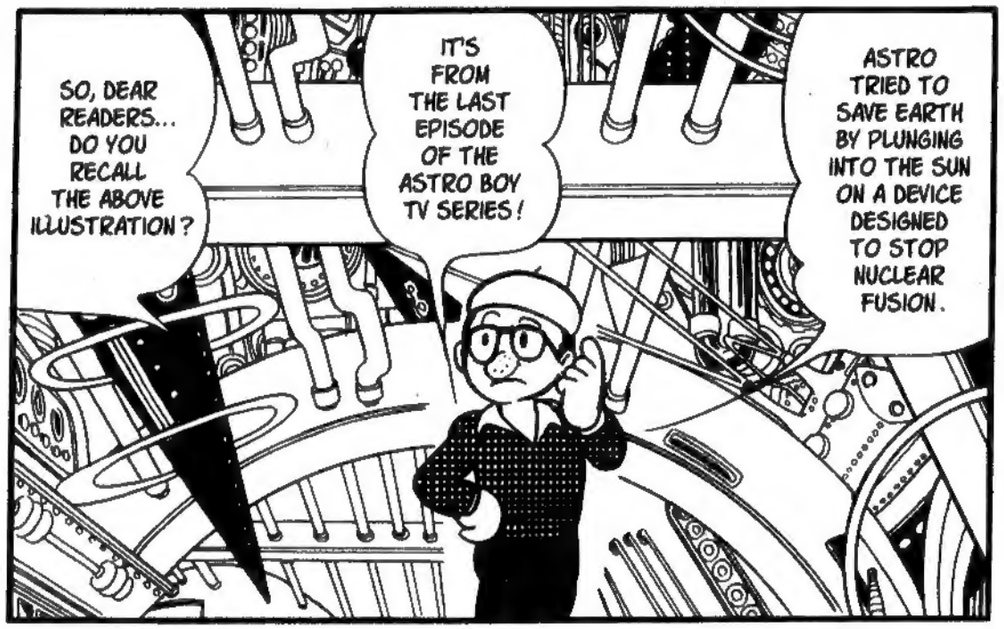
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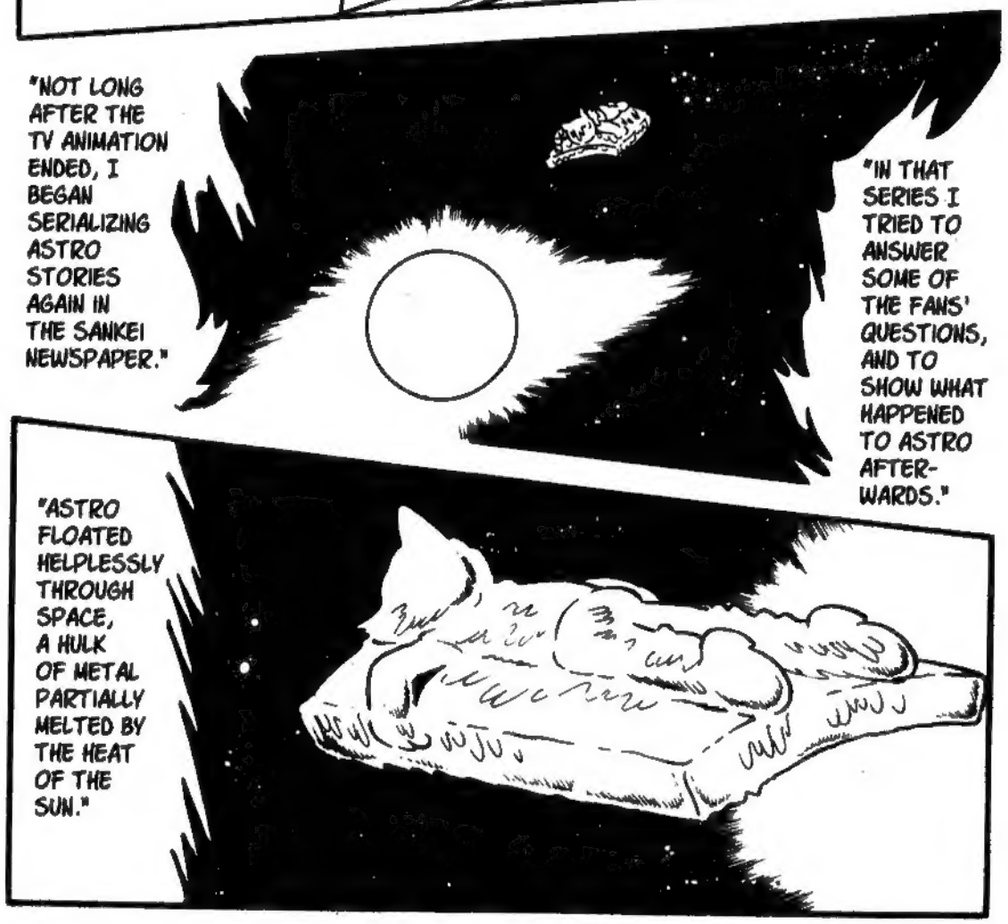
"ONCE UPON A TIME" ASTRO BOY TALES, PART 1

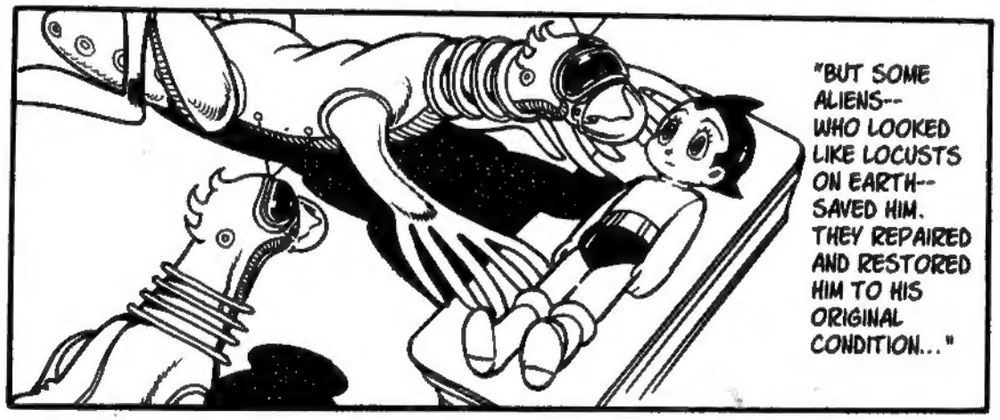
First serialized from January 24th to December 23, 1967 in the *Sankei* newspaper.

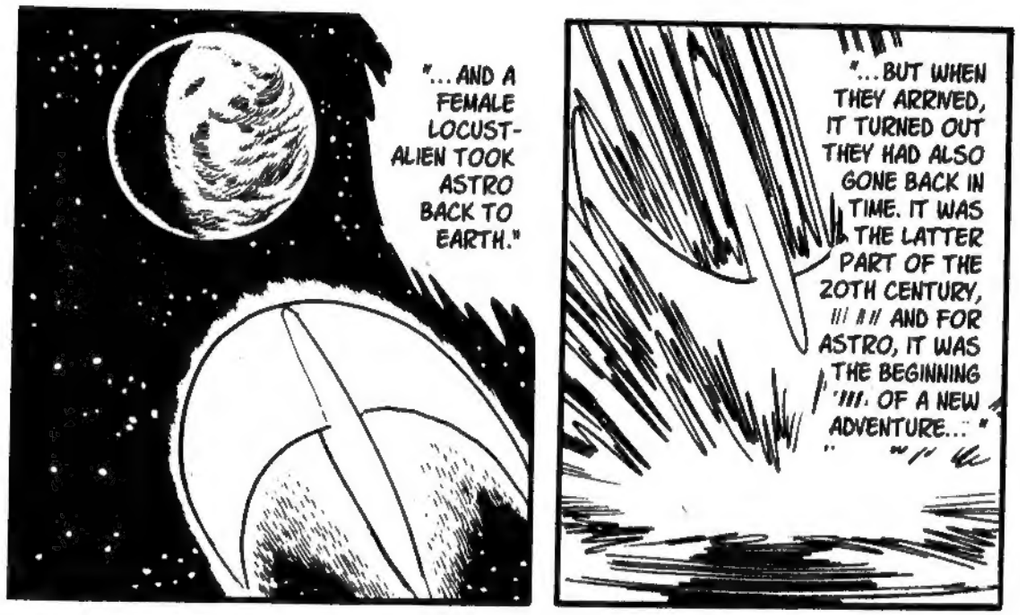



SO, DEAR READERS... DO YOU RECALL THE ABOVE ILLUSTRATION?
IT'S FROM THE LAST EPISODE OF THE ASTRO BOY TV SERIES!
ASTRO TRIED TO SAVE EARTH BY PLUNGING INTO THE SUN ON A DEVICE DESIGNED TO STOP NUCLEAR FUSION.

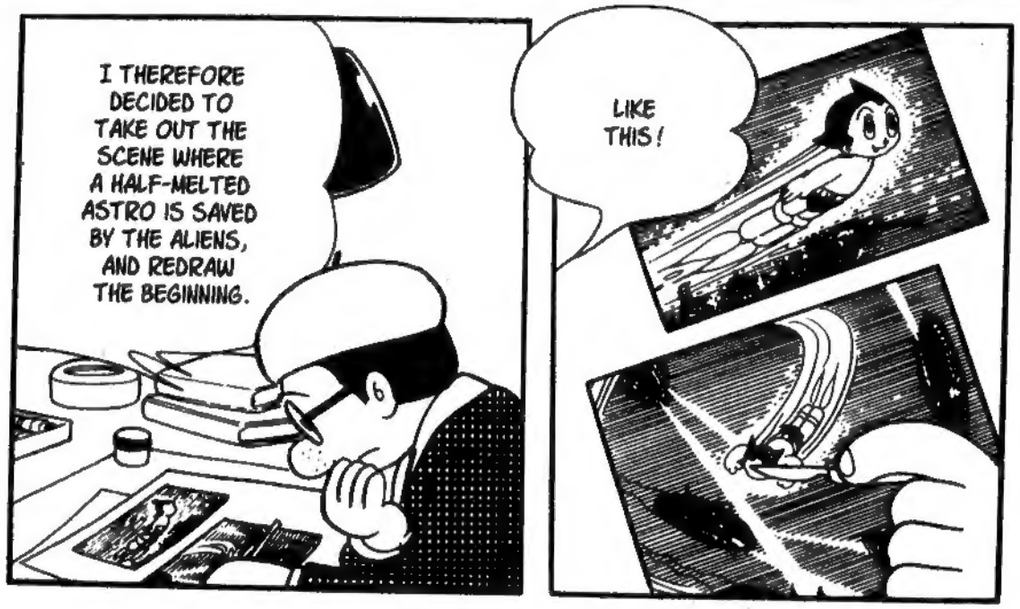

"WHAT HAPPENED TO ASTRO? DID HE DIE? OR DID HE LIVE TO COME BACK AND FIGHT ANOTHER DAY?"
"FANS ALL OVER JAPAN WERE DISAP-POINTED BY THIS ENDING."


"NOT LONG AFTER THE TV ANIMATION ENDED, I BEGAN SERIALIZING ASTRO STORIES AGAIN IN THE SANKEI NEWSPAPER."
"IN THAT SERIES I TRIED TO ANSWER SOME OF THE FANS' QUESTIONS, AND TO SHOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ASTRO AFTER-WARDS."
"ASTRO FLOATED HELPLESSLY THROUGH SPACE, A HULK OF METAL PARTIALLY MELTED BY THE HEAT OF THE SUN."


"BUT SOME ALIENS-- WHO LOOKED LIKE LOCUSTS ON EARTH-- SAVED HIM. THEY REPAIRED AND RESTORED HIM TO HIS ORIGINAL CONDITION..."

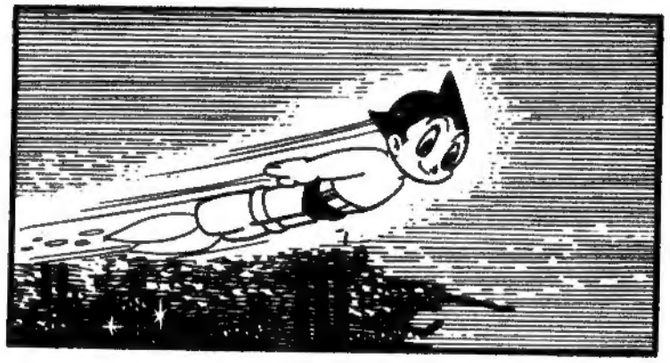

"... AND A FEMALE LOCUST-ALIEN TOOK ASTRO BACK TO EARTH."
"... BUT WHEN THEY ARRIVED, IT TURNED OUT THEY HAD ALSO GONE BACK IN TIME. IT WAS THE LATTER PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY, AND FOR ASTRO, IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ADVENTURE..."

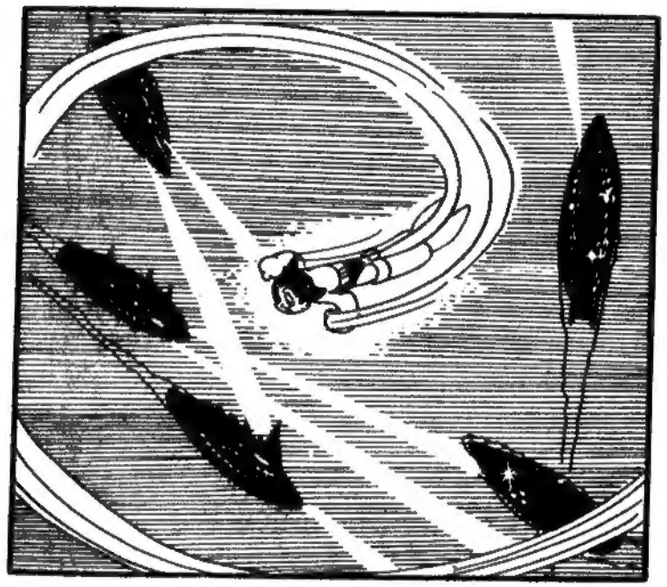

THE ASTRO STORIES I DREW FOR THE NEWSPAPER HAD ALMOST NO RELATIONSHIP TO THE SERIES I HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN DRAWING IN MANGA MAGAZINES.
TO BEGIN WITH, IN THE MAGAZINES I NEVER DREW THE SCENE WHERE HE PLUNGES INTO THE SUN. SO WHEN COMPILING THIS COLLECTION IT SEEMED A REAL DISSERVICE TO FANS TO START FROM THE MIDDLE OF A STORY.


I THEREFORE DECIDED TO TAKE OUT THE SCENE WHERE A HALF-MELTED ASTRO IS SAVED BY THE ALIENS, AND REDRAW THE BEGINNING.
LIKE THIS!

BEGINNING OF THE CONTRADICTION

IT WAS A WARM SPRING EVENING. ROBOTS OFTEN HAVE THEIR ELECTRO-BRAINS PROGRAMMED TO FEEL PLEASURE WHEN IT'S GOOD WEATHER, SO ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT ASTRO DECIDED TO TAKE A JAUNT OUT BY THE HARBOR.



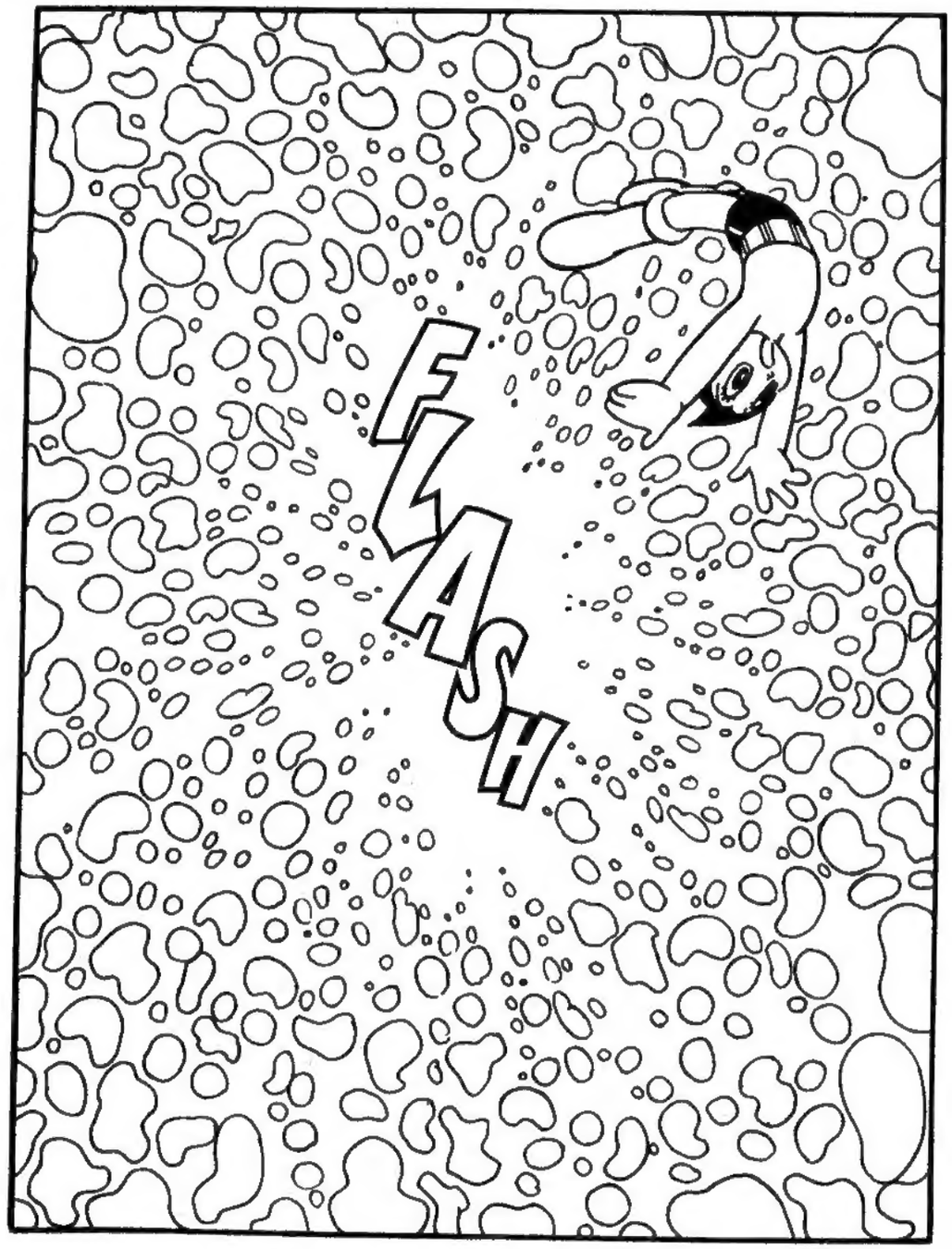


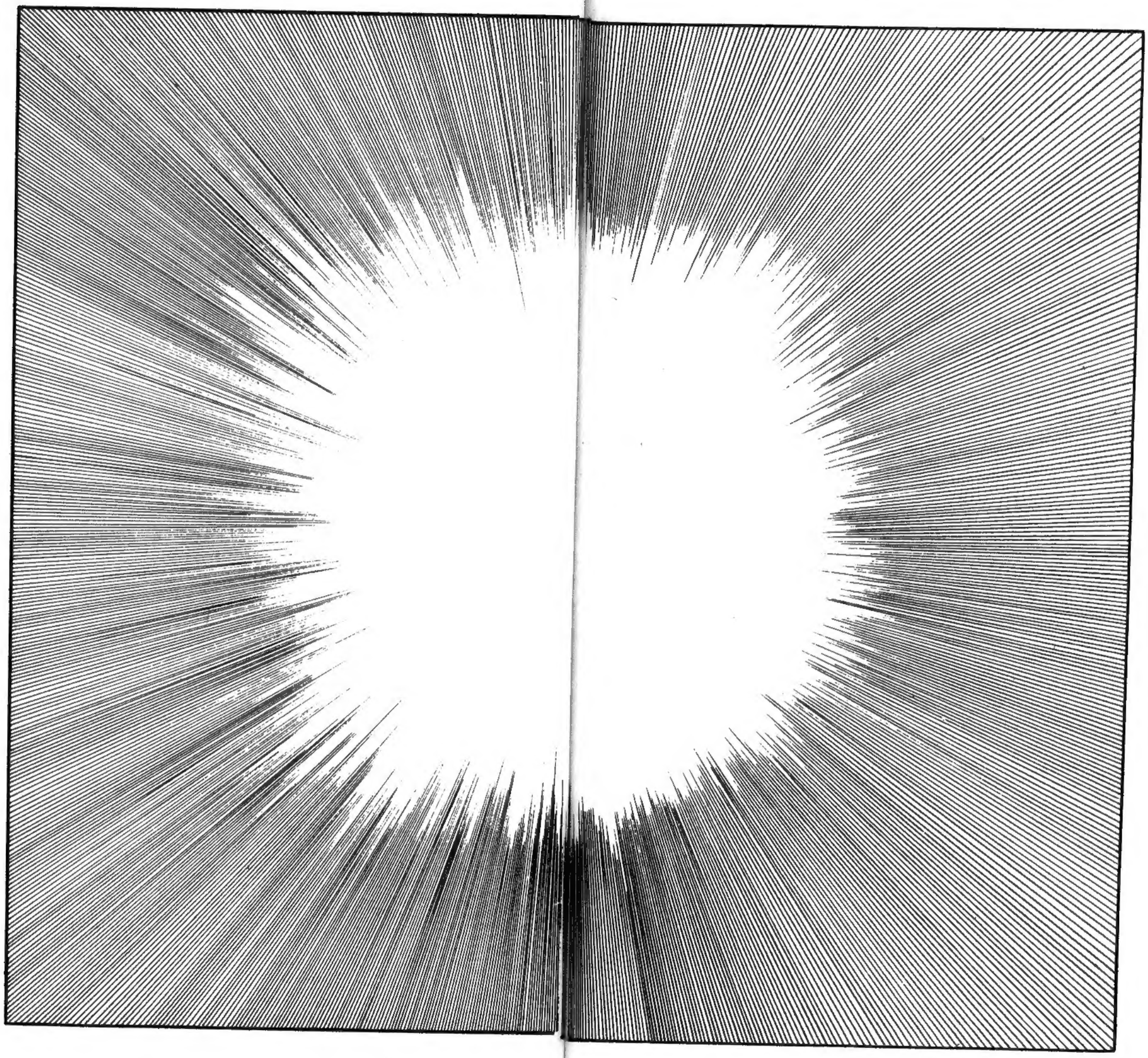
AS HE SURVEYED THE HARBOR HE THOUGHT, "HMM, THAT'S ODD..." THERE WERE AT LEAST TEN SHIPS-- PATROL BOATS AND MINESWEEPERS-- ALL GATHERING, LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, THE BEAMS FROM THEIR SEARCHLIGHTS CRISS-CROSSING THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.

"THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE SEA!" HE THOUGHT, IN A SURGE OF EXCITEMENT. PLUNGING INTO THE WATER, HE ENCOUNTERED A HUGE SWIRL OF BUBBLES, AND FELT A SURGE OF RADIATION. SOMETHING VERY STRANGE WAS GOING ON.

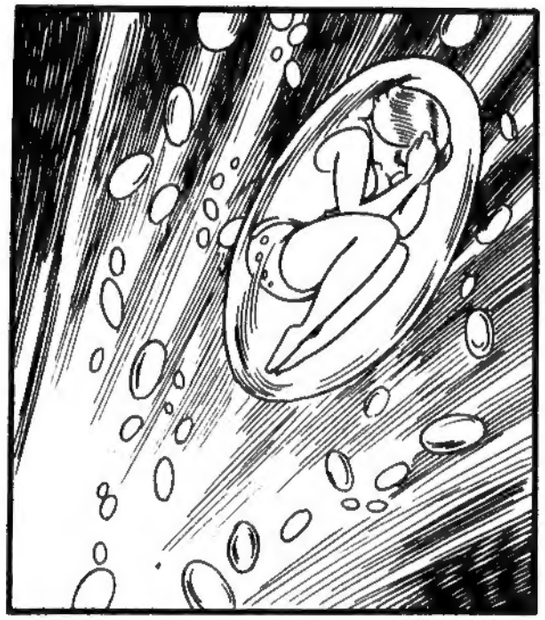


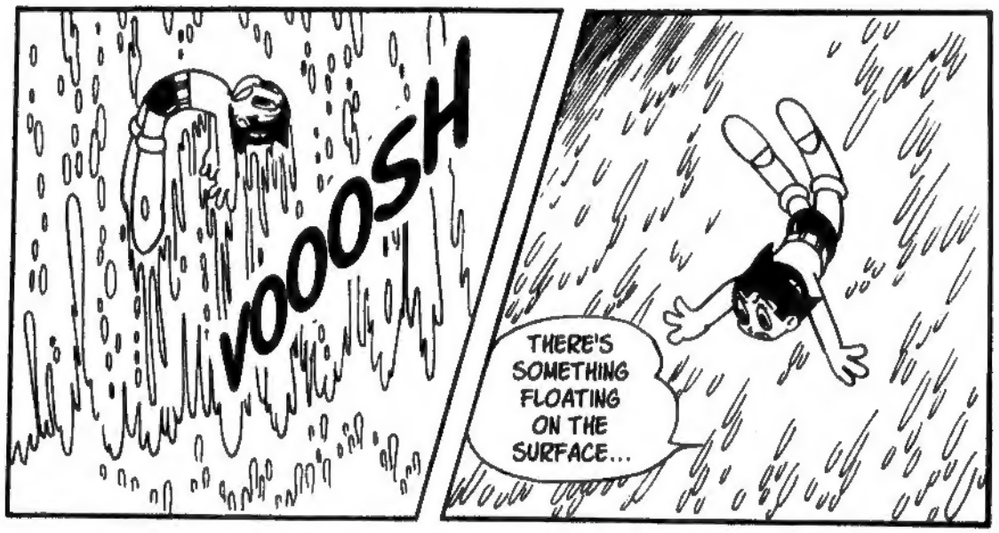


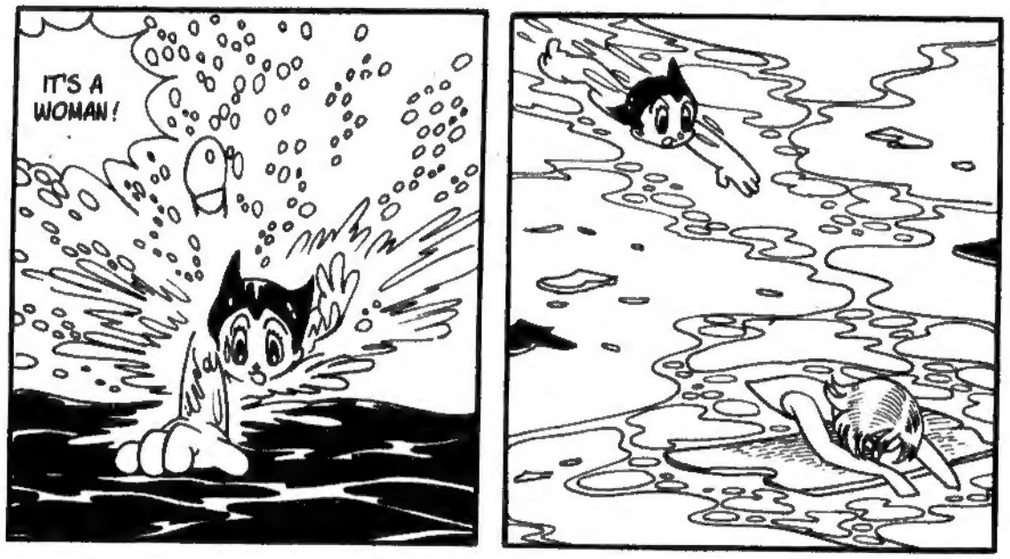




ASTRO WAS FLUNG TO THE SURFACE OF THE SEA BY THE FORCE OF A HUGE BLAST. BUT SOMETHING ALSO EMERGED FROM THE EXPLOSION. IT WAS A HUGE BUBBLE, AND IT CONTAINED A HUMAN.

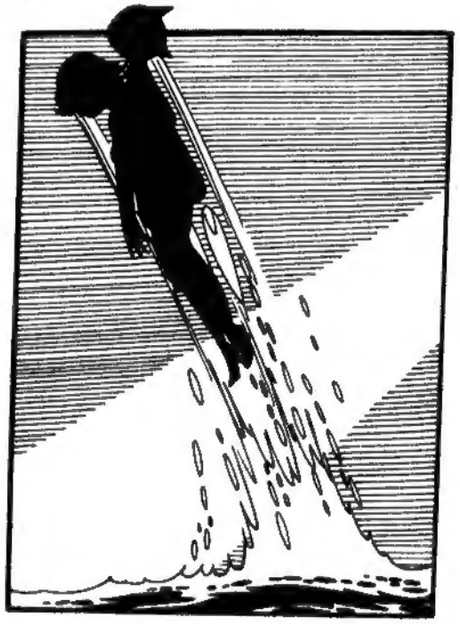






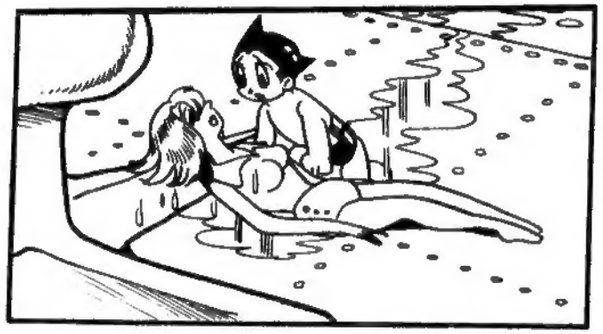
THE WOMAN WAS UNCONSCIOUS AND NOT MOVING, AND ASTRO KNEW HE HAD TO HELP HER, BUT HIS ELECTRO-BRAIN ALSO TOLD HIM SHE WAS NOT HUMAN.

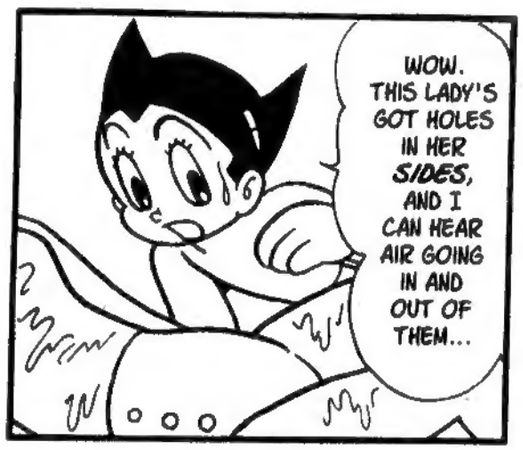


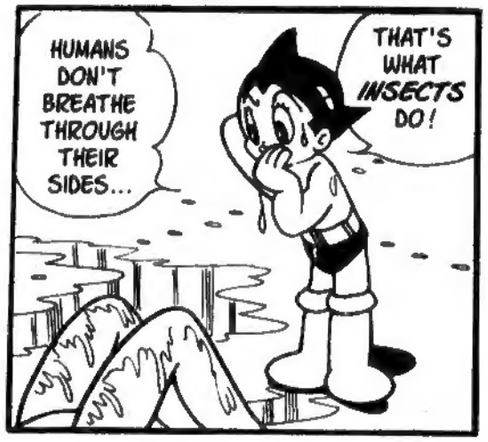


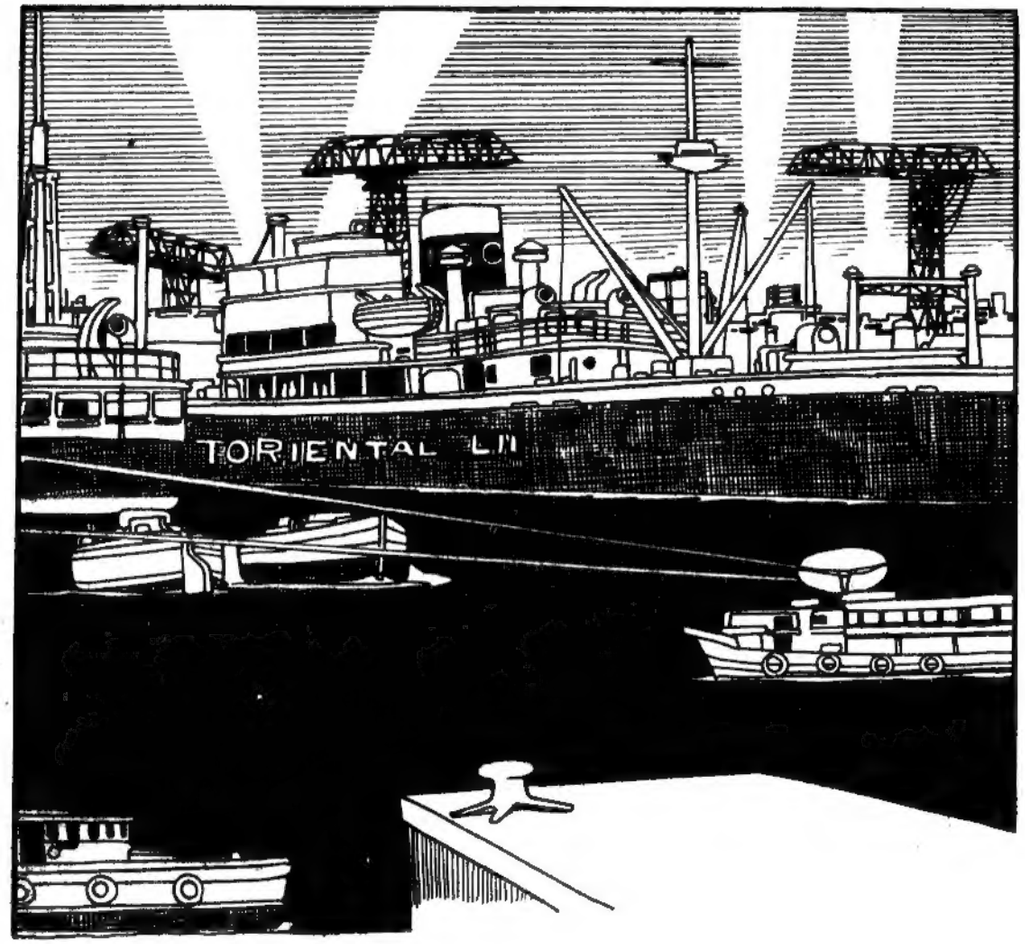
HE DECIDED TO TAKE HER TO LAND, TO A DESERTED PIER NEARBY. THERE, HE TRIED TO RESUSCITATE HER UNCONSCIOUS FORM BY GENTLY SHAKING HER. AND THEN HE NOTICED SOMETHING STRANGE.

HER HEART WAS STILL BEATING, BUT SHE WAS NOT BREATHING. NO AIR WAS GOING IN AND OUT OF HER NOSTRILS AT ALL-- WHILE SHE HAD A NOSE, IT DEFINITELY WAS NOT FUNCTIONING AS ONE.









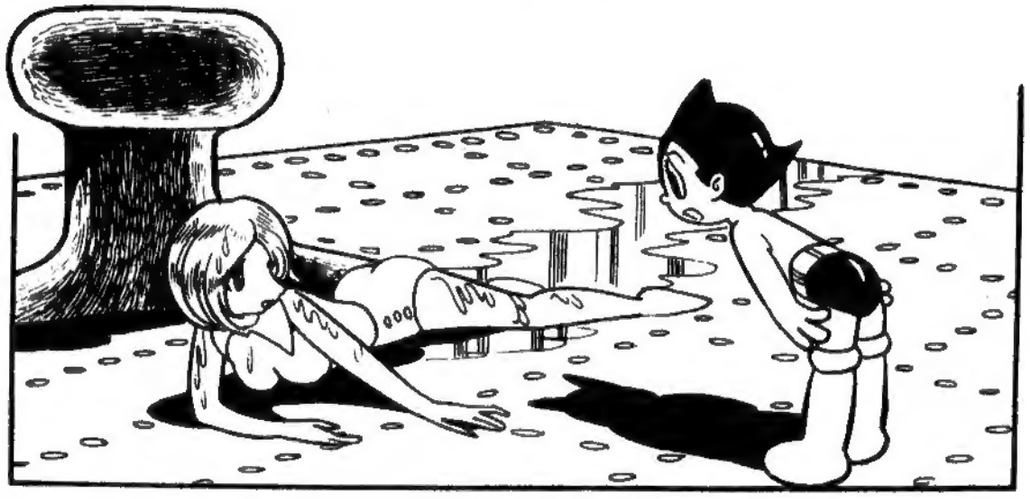
THE WOMAN OPENED HER EYES, AND STARED AT ASTRO.

"WHAT HAPPENED, LADY? IF YOU CAN TALK, SAY SOMETHING TO ME," HE BEGGED.

"I CAN TALK," SHE REPLIED. "YOU'RE A ROBOT, AREN'T YOU...?"

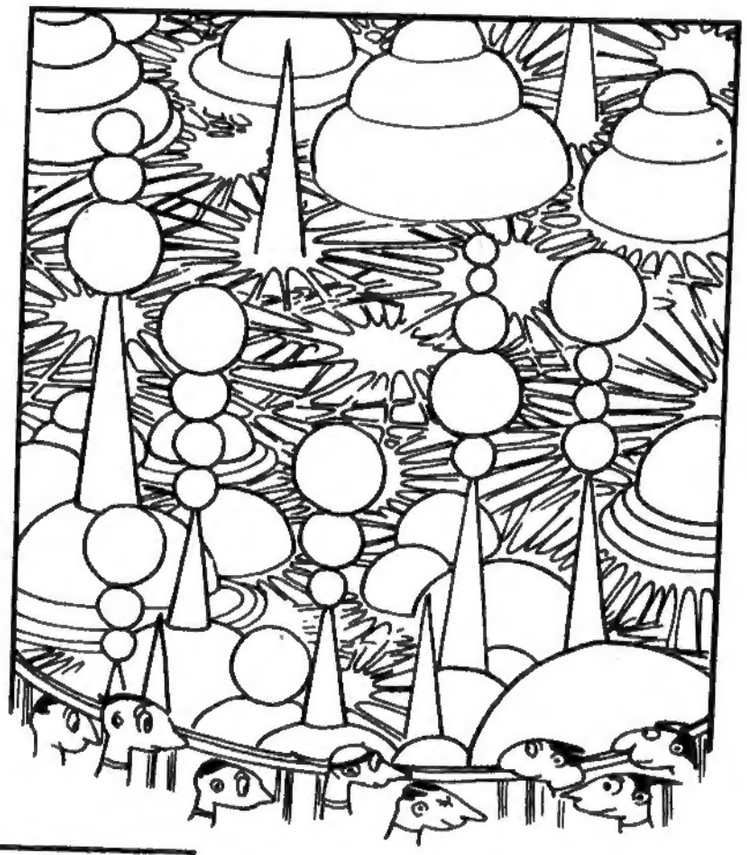
"OF COURSE I AM, BUT HOW'D YOU KNOW?"

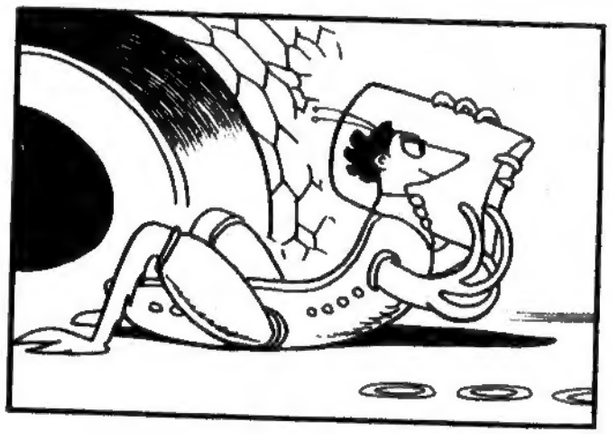
THE WOMAN DIDN'T ANSWER DIRECTLY, AND MERELY SAID,
"IF YOU'RE A ROBOT, YOU'LL KEEP WHAT I TELL YOU A SECRET, RIGHT?"



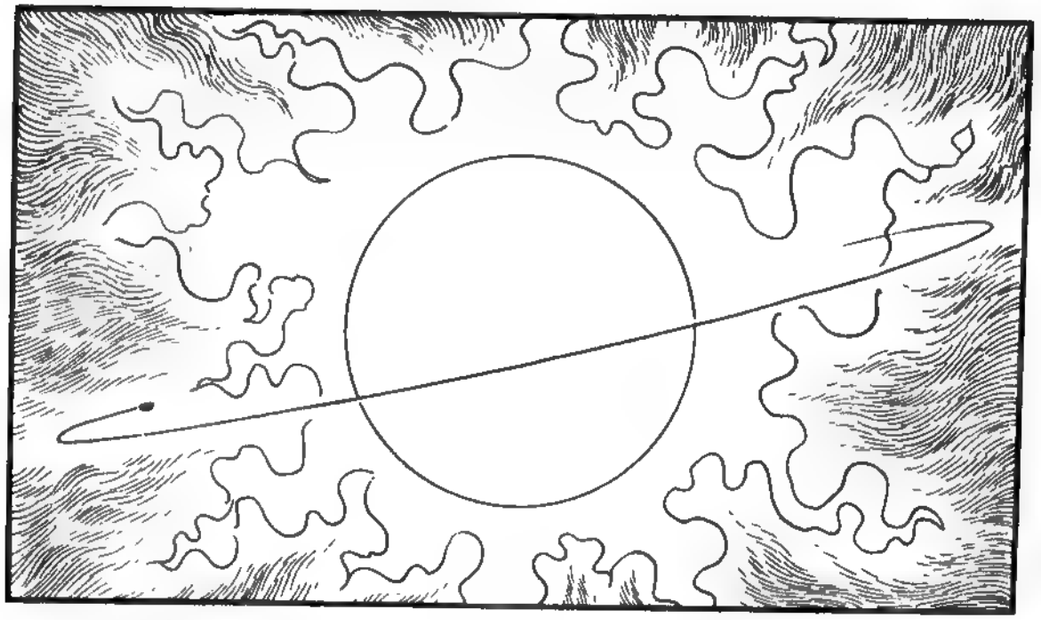


THE INSECT-WOMAN'S PLANET HAD A VERY ADVANCED CIVILIZATION. THE PEOPLE IN THE CAPITAL LOOKED JUST LIKE LOCUSTS, BUT THEY WORE BEAUTIFUL CLOTHES AS THEY BUSILY HOPPED ABOUT. WITH THEIR POWERFUL HIND LEGS, THEY COULD TRAVEL OVER 50 YARDS IN ONE LEAP.

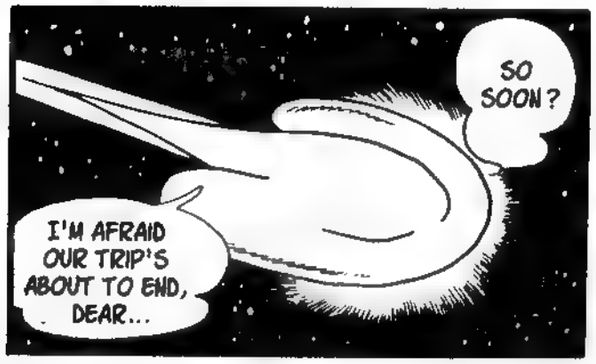


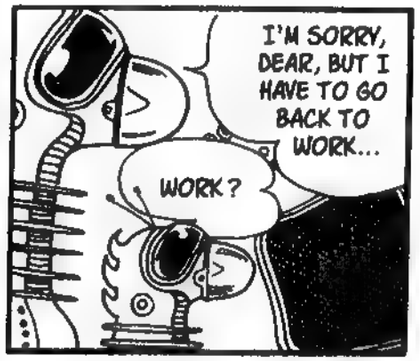


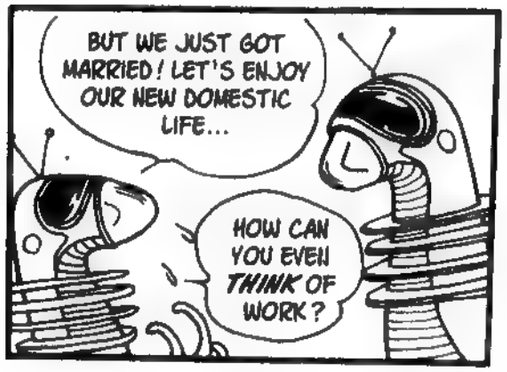
ONE THING ODD ABOUT THEM, THOUGH, WAS THAT THEY HAD FACES EXACTLY LIKE THOSE OF HUMANS. THEY HAD HAIR ON THEIR HEADS, EYEBROWS, AND THE MALES HAD BEARDS, TOO. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMANS THEY LOOKED SHOCKING, EVEN HILARIOUS. BUT THE LOCUST-PEOPLE CONSIDERED THEMSELVES PERFECTLY NORMAL.

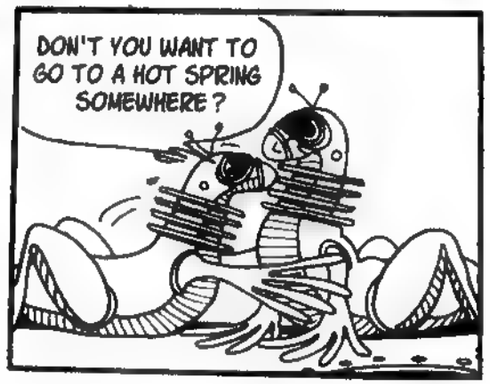


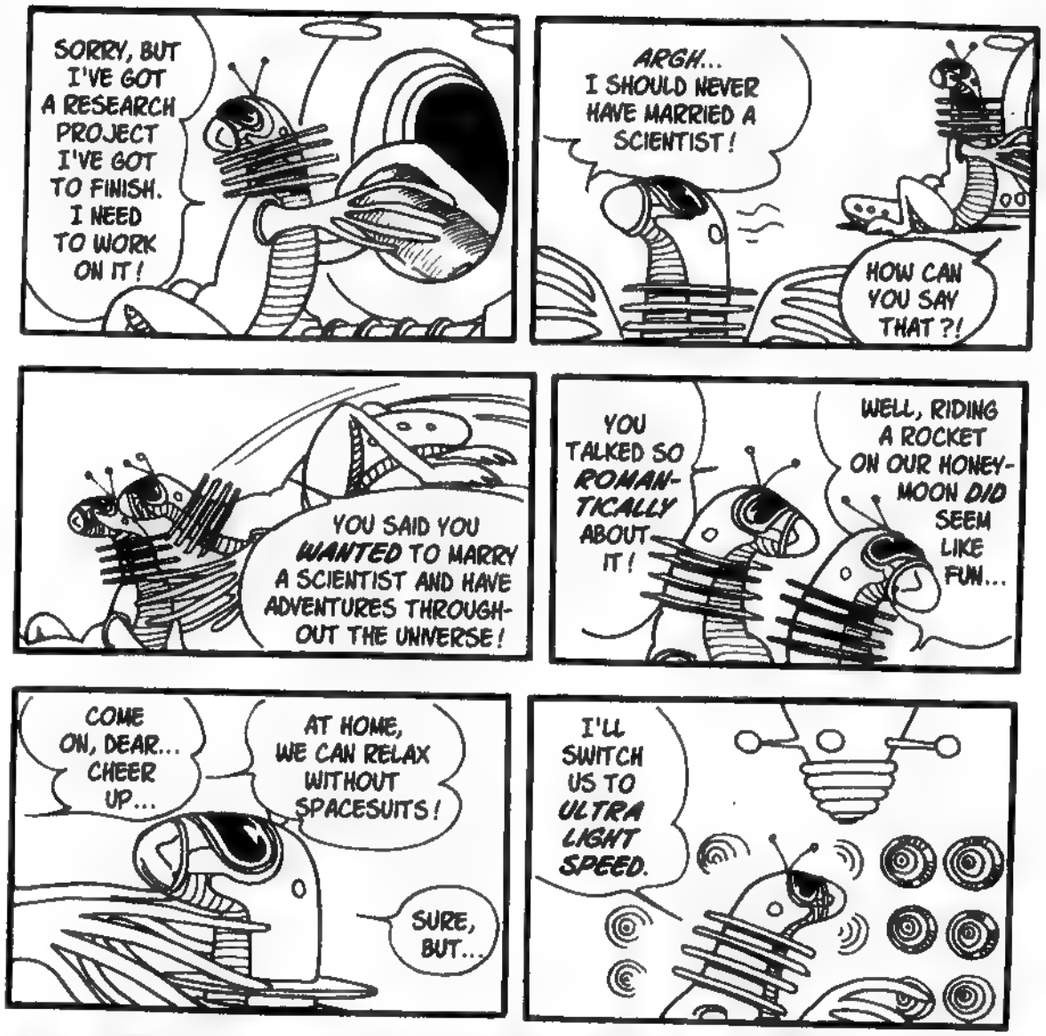
MR. AND MRS. OHARA WERE A NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE.
FOR THEIR HONEYMOON, THEY TOOK OFF ON A SPACE ROCKET,
VISITING A VARIETY OF PLANETS. BUT THE MAN--OR THE MALE LOCUST--
WAS EMPLOYED AS A SCIENTIST, AND IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO RETURN.





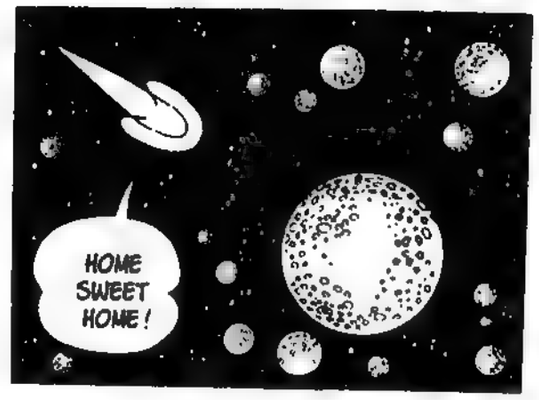


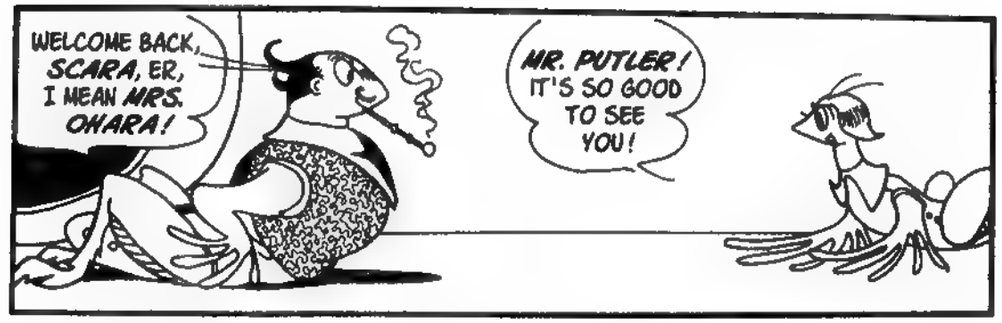



SORRY, BUT I'VE GOT A RESEARCH PROJECT I'VE GOT TO FINISH. I NEED TO WORK ON IT!
ARGH... I SHOULD NEVER HAVE MARRIED A SCIENTIST!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?!
YOU SAID YOU *WANTED* TO MARRY A SCIENTIST AND HAVE ADVENTURES THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE!
YOU TALKED SO *ROMANTICALLY* ABOUT IT!
WELL, RIDING A ROCKET ON OUR HONEYMOON *DID* SEEM LIKE FUN...
COME ON, DEAR... CHEER UP...
AT HOME, WE CAN RELAX WITHOUT SPACESUITS!
SURE, BUT...
I'LL SWITCH US TO *ULTRA LIGHT SPEED.*



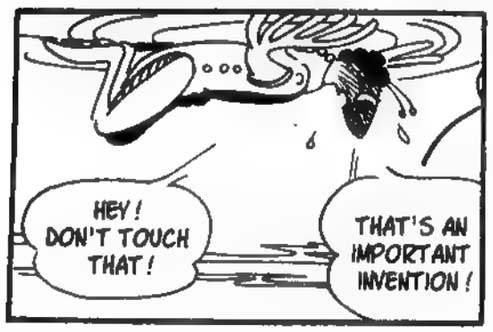
THE LOCUST PEOPLE
HAD AMAZINGLY ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY. USING A
FOURTH DIMENSIONAL LEAP,
THEY COULD GO ANYWHERE
IN THE UNIVERSE IN
AN INSTANT.




WELCOME BACK, SCARA, ER, I MEAN MRS. OHARA!
MR. PUTLER! IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU!

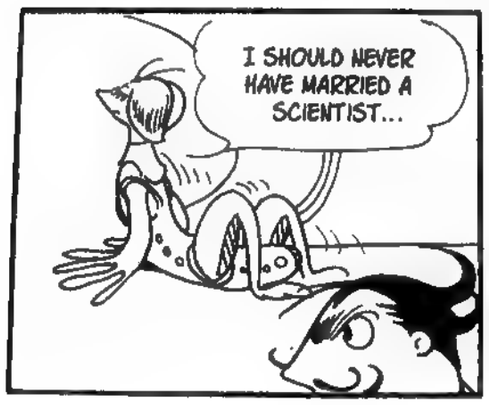

WHAT'S THIS STRANGE THING?
IT'S MY HUSBAND'S RESEARCH...

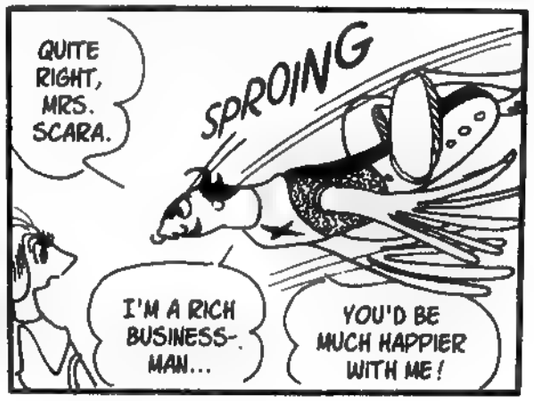

HM... WONDER WHAT IT IS...

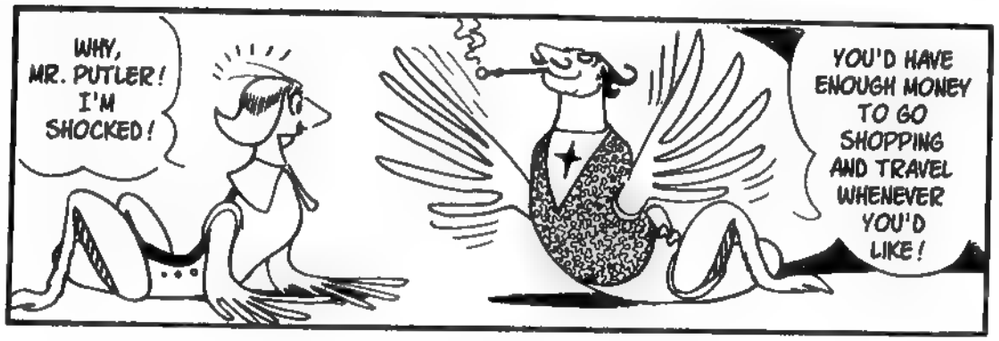

HEY! DON'T TOUCH THAT!
THAT'S AN IMPORTANT INVENTION!


AH, DR. OHARA! DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE UP THERE... HEH HEH.
SO HOW WAS THE HONEY-MOON?


IT WAS BORING...
OH, REALLY?
ALL HE EVER TALKED ABOUT WAS STUFF I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND!


I SHOULD NEVER HAVE MARRIED A SCIENTIST...


QUITE RIGHT, MRS. SCARA.
SPROING
I'M A RICH BUSINESS-MAN...
YOU'D BE MUCH HAPPIER WITH ME!

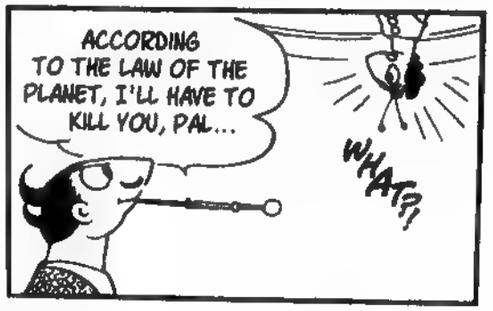

WHY, MR. PUTLER! I'M SHOCKED!
YOU'D HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO GO SHOPPING AND TRAVEL WHENEVER YOU'D LIKE!

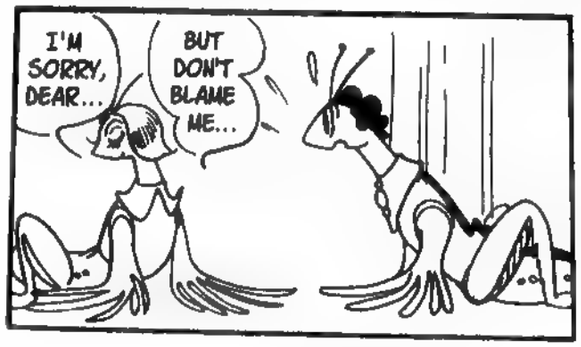

HOW SWEET!

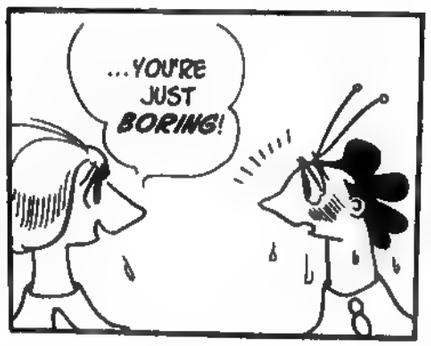

YOU'D LIVE IN A MANSION AND DINE ON THE BEST!


GOSH, I'D MUCH RATHER BE YOUR WIFE, MR. PUTLER!


A WORD FROM YOU, MADAM, AND HE'S GONE.


ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE PLANET, I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU, PAL...
WHAT?!

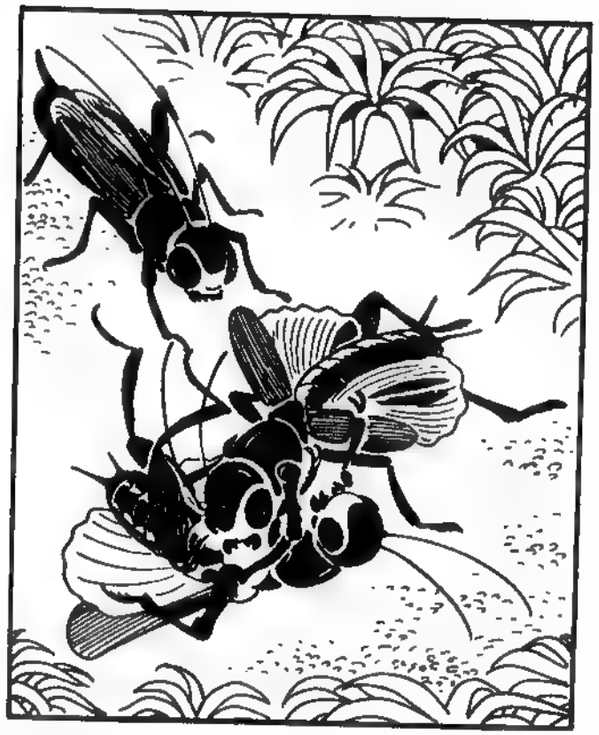

I'M SORRY, DEAR...
BUT DON'T BLAME ME...


...YOU'RE JUST BORING!

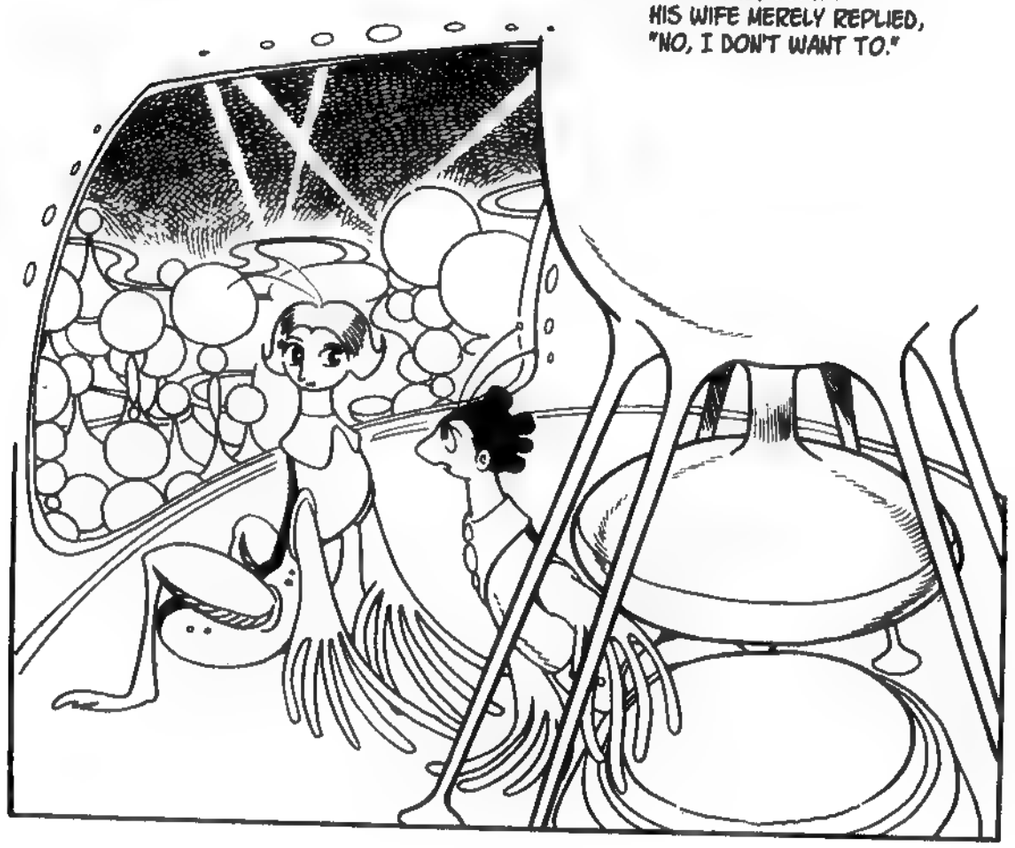

KILL ME IF YOU MUST...
...BUT GIVE ME ONE NIGHT, SO I CAN FINISH MY RESEARCH.


VERY WELL, THEN. I'LL LET YOU LIVE 'TIL TOMORROW.

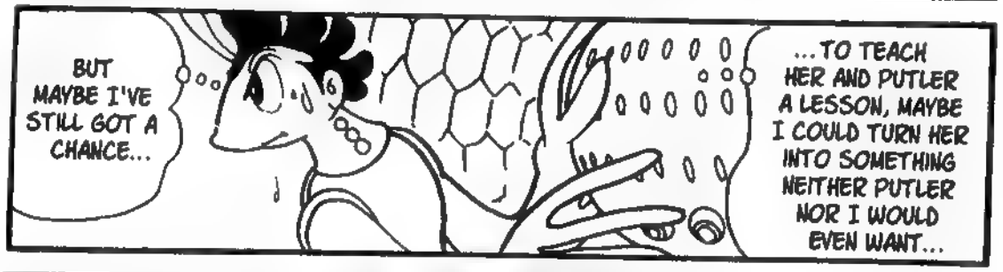
THE RITUAL WAS WELL ESTABLISHED ON THE PLANET. WHY, YOU ASK? WELL, ITS PEOPLE HAD EVOLVED FROM INSECTS, AND AS SOME READERS MAY KNOW, TWO MALE GRASSHOPPERS AND KATYDIDS WILL BATTLE TO THE DEATH OVER A FEMALE. IN OTHER WORDS, IN ORDER TO BE WITH THE FEMALE, ONE OF THE MALES MUST DIE. AND SO IT WAS ON THIS PLANET. THERE WAS NOTHING THE POOR SCIENTIST COULD DO ABOUT IT WHEN THE BUSINESSMAN TRIED TO TAKE HIS WIFE...

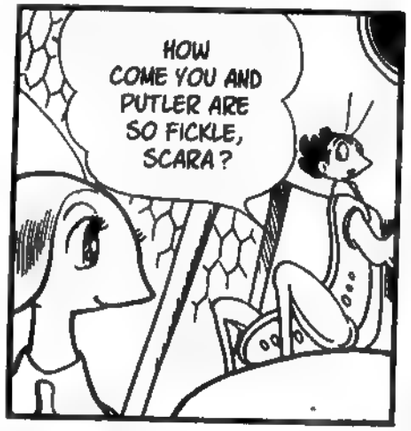


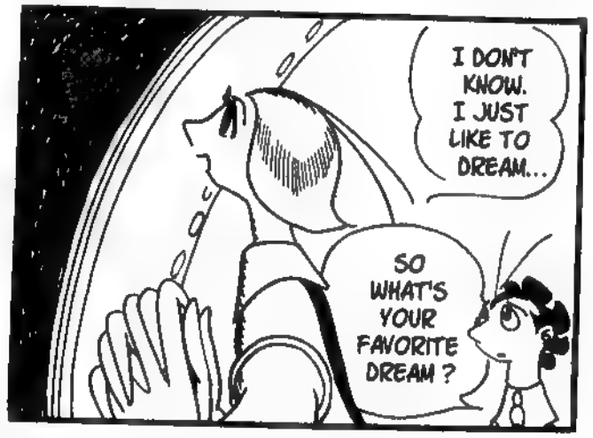
WHEN HE PLEADED, "WON'T YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, DEAR?" HIS WIFE MERELY REPLIED, "NO, I DON'T WANT TO."






BUT MAYBE I'VE STILL GOT A CHANCE...
...TO TEACH HER AND PUTLER A LESSON, MAYBE I COULD TURN HER INTO SOMETHING NEITHER PUTLER NOR I WOULD EVEN WANT...







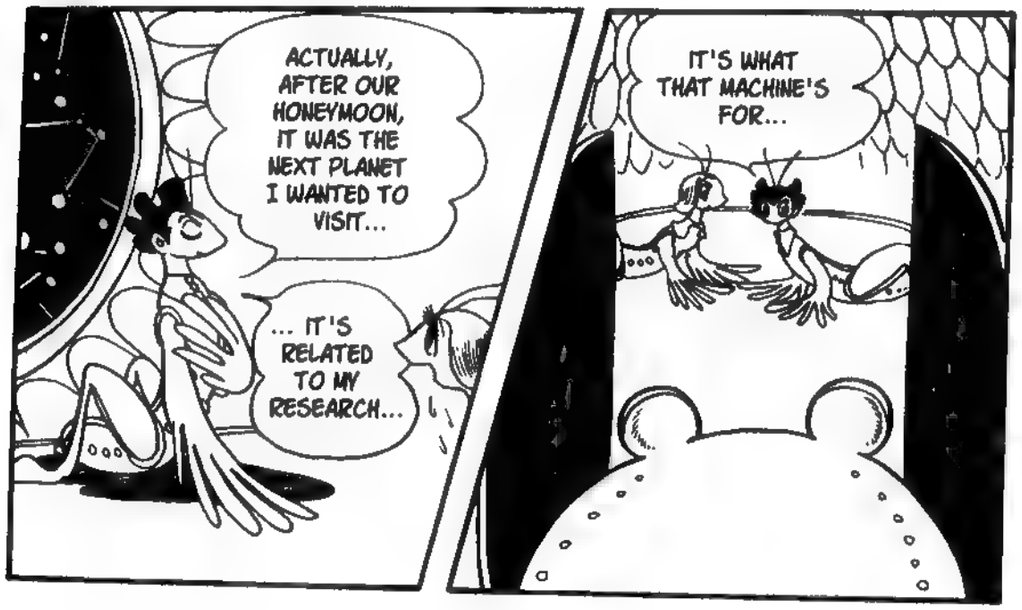


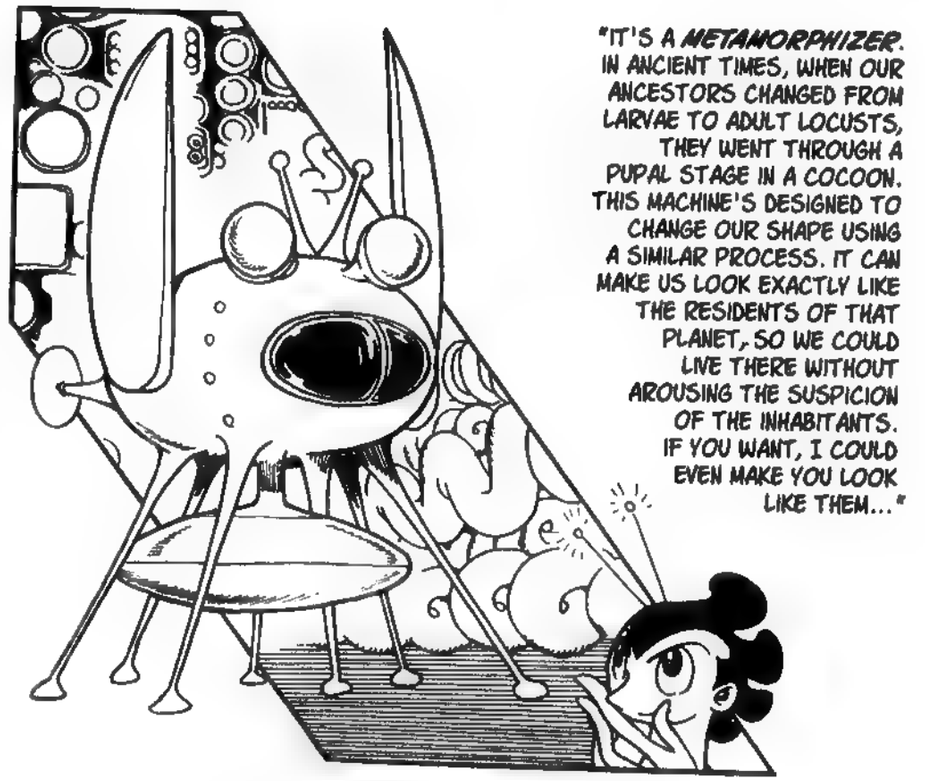



THEY'VE GOT THINGS YOU NEVER SEE HERE, LIKE FORESTS AND MOUNTAINS AND GRASSY PLAINS AND OCEANS.
REALLY ?

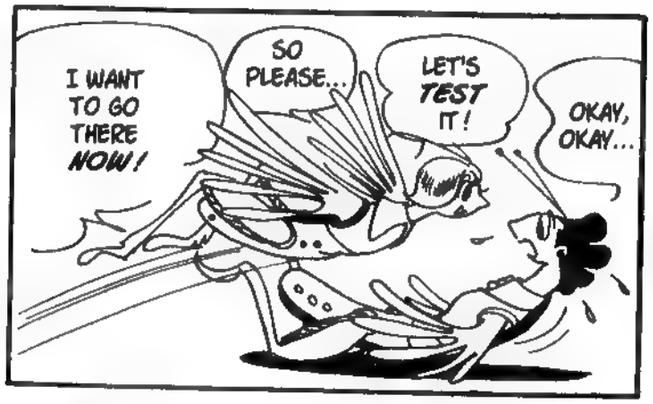

GOSH, I'D LOVE TO GO THERE ! I'M SURE IT'D BE A WONDERFUL LIFE !
SPRONG

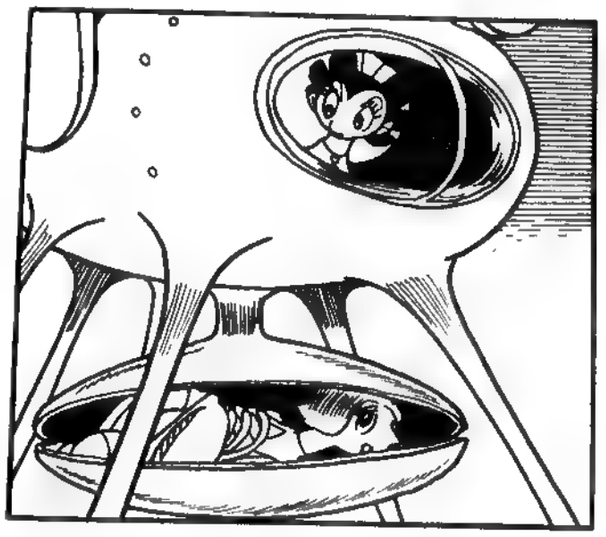

"A GREEN LAND, WITH FIELDS AND MOUNTAINS..."
"CAN IT REALLY BE TRUE ?"
"COMPARED TO THAT, OUR PLANET'S SUCH A BORING WASTELAND..."


ACTUALLY, AFTER OUR HONEYMOON, IT WAS THE NEXT PLANET I WANTED TO VISIT...
... IT'S RELATED TO MY RESEARCH...
IT'S WHAT THAT MACHINE'S FOR...


"IT'S A METAMORPHIZER. IN ANCIENT TIMES, WHEN OUR ANCESTORS CHANGED FROM LARVAE TO ADULT LOCUSTS, THEY WENT THROUGH A PUPAL STAGE IN A COCOON. THIS MACHINE'S DESIGNED TO CHANGE OUR SHAPE USING A SIMILAR PROCESS. IT CAN MAKE US LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THE RESIDENTS OF THAT PLANET, SO WE COULD LIVE THERE WITHOUT AROUSING THE SUSPICION OF THE INHABITANTS. IF YOU WANT, I COULD EVEN MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE THEM..."


PLEASE, DEAR...
PLEASE MAKE ME LOOK LIKE THEM...

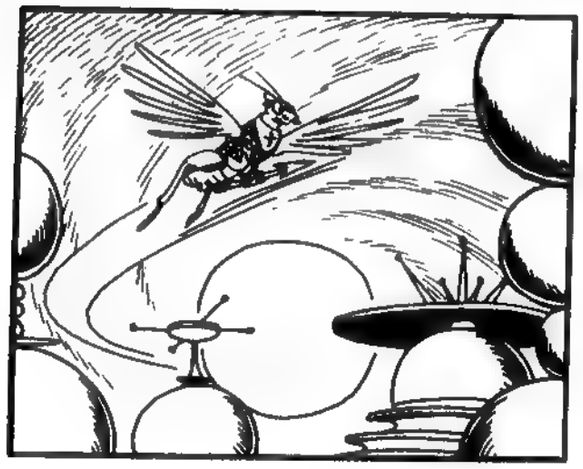

I WANT TO GO THERE NOW!
SO PLEASE...
LET'S TEST IT!
OKAY, OKAY...


"YOU SURE ARE IN A HURRY, SCARA... BUT IF YOU INSIST... GET IN THE CASE UNDER THE MACHINE. I'LL BE IN THE UPPER PART, SETTING THINGS UP SO WE CAN CHANGE YOUR SHAPE. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY STILL FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR, OR YOU MIGHT TURN INTO SOMETHING REALLY WEIRD..."

THE METAMORPHIZER MADE A SOUND LIKE BEATING INSECT WINGS, AND THEN, WITH A HISS, EMITTED STEAM...

"IN AN HOUR YOU'LL BE TRANSFORMED INTO A NEW PERSON," THE SCIENTIST SAID...



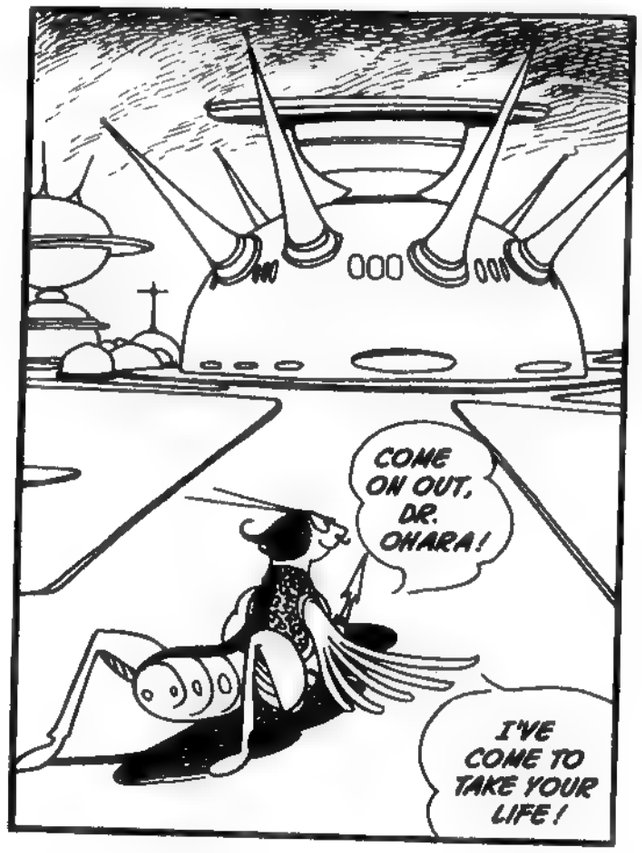


BUT THEN HE ALSO REALIZED THAT A NEW DAY WAS DAWNING, AND THAT PUTLER WOULD BE COMING TO KILL HIM. HE GLANCED OUT THE WINDOW AND SIGHED.

OUTSIDE IN THE EARLY MORNING SKY, HE COULD SEE A SHAPE SPRINGING TOWARD HIM.

"PUTLER'S FINALLY HERE...," HE THOUGHT, NOTING THE BIG WEAPON HE HAD BROUGHT WITH HIM.

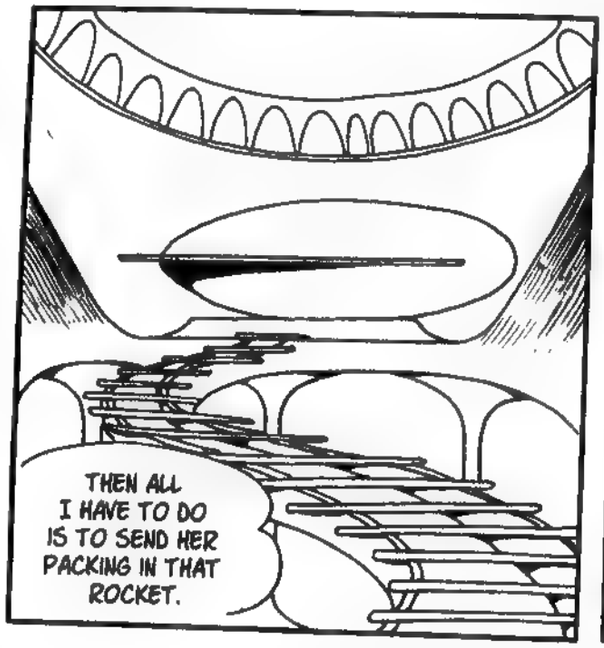
"AS PROMISED, I'VE COME FOR YOU, DR. OHARA, JUST LIKE I SAID I WOULD," PUTLER ANNOUNCED.

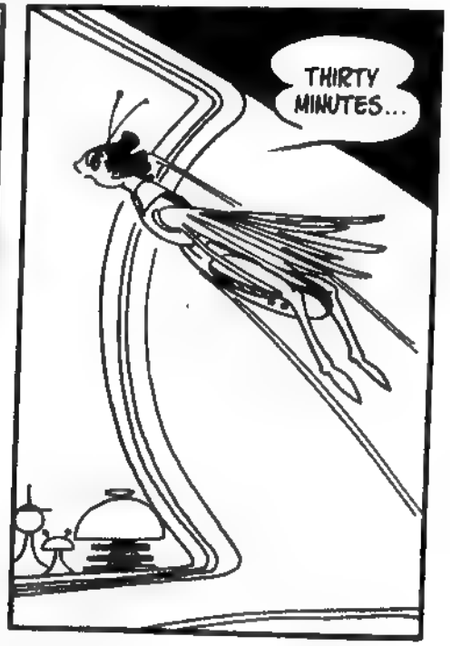




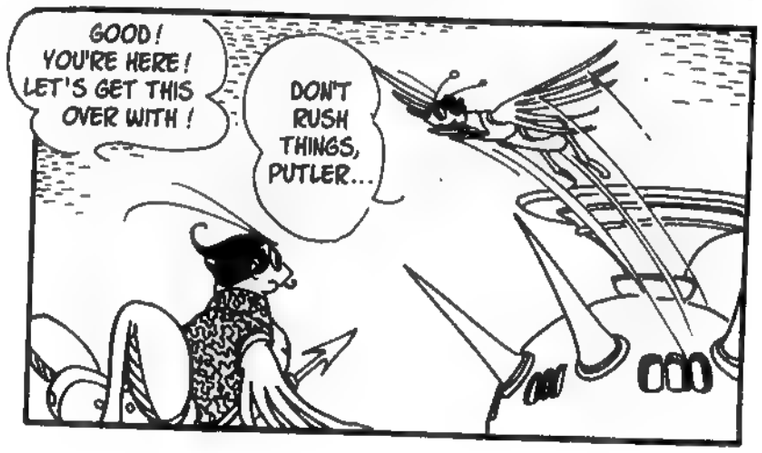


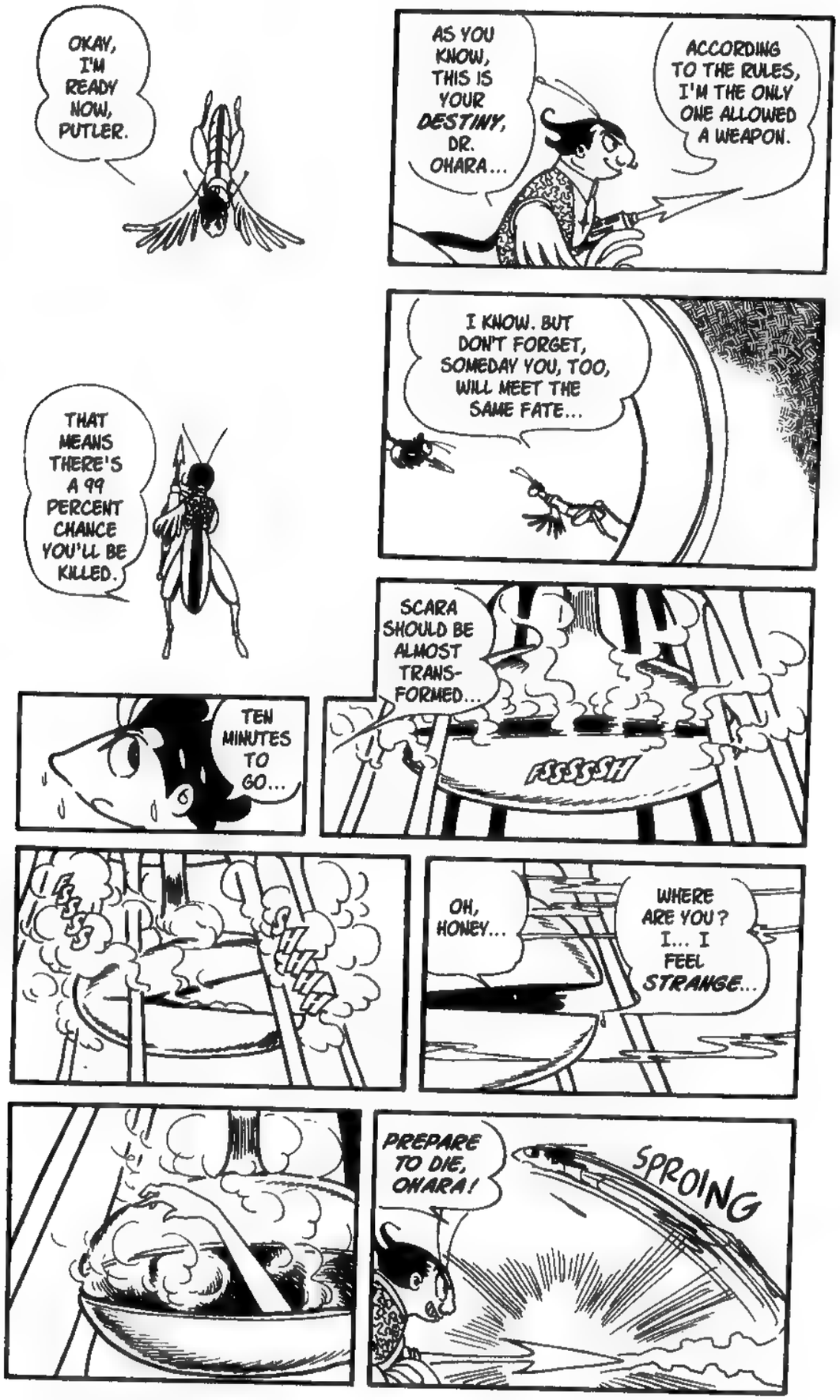


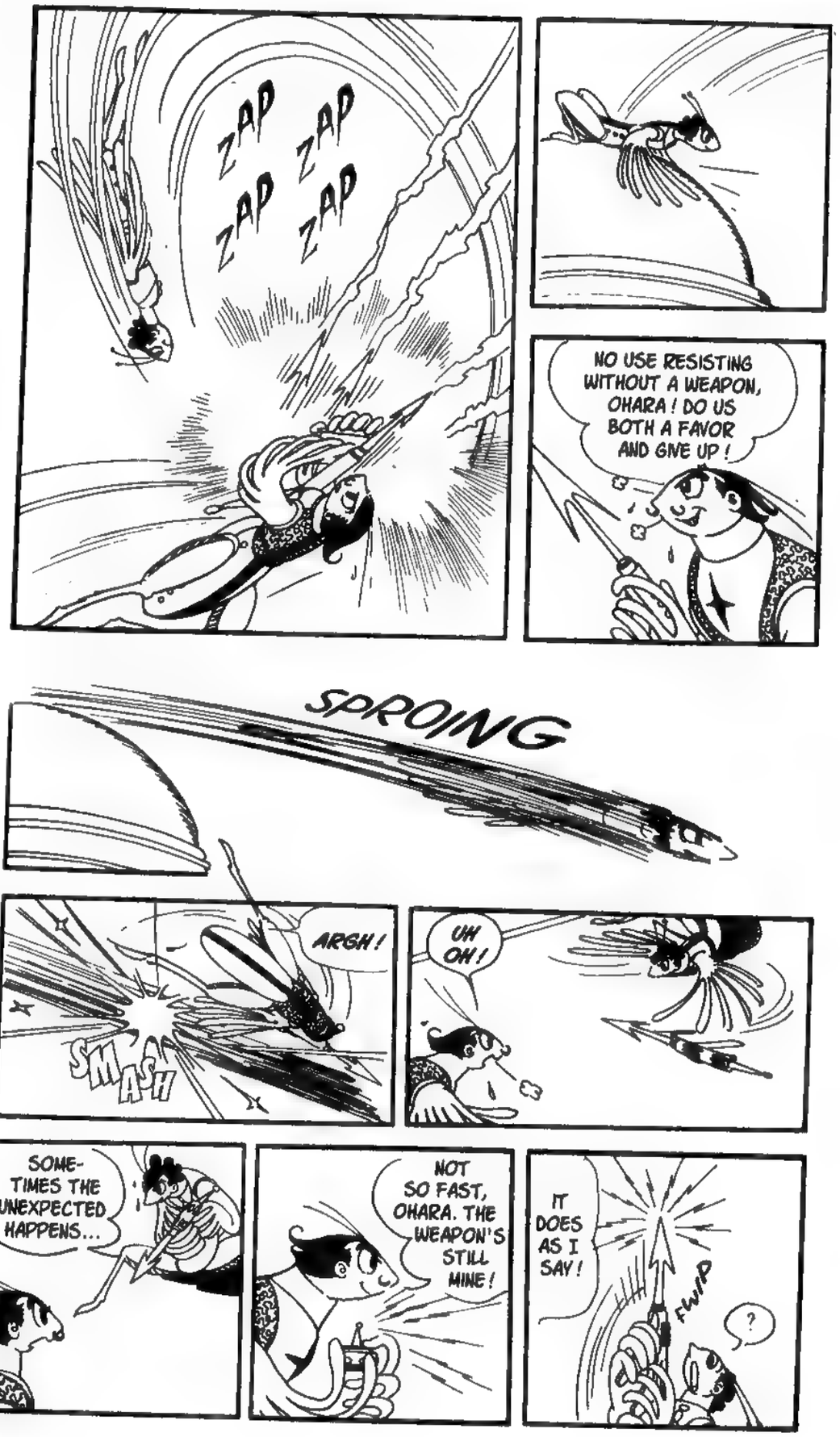


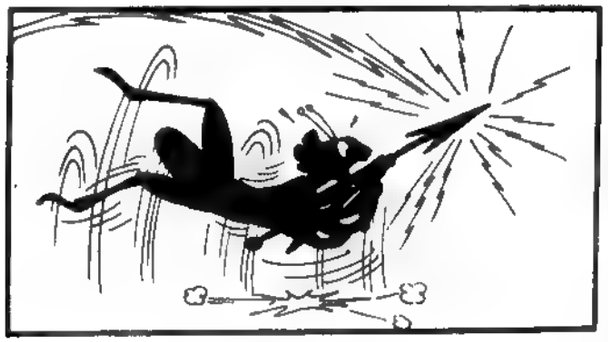


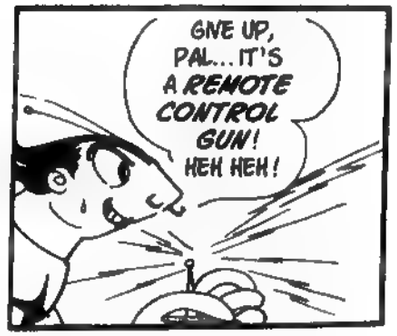
"IF I'M KILLED BEFORE THIRTY MINUTES ARE UP, EVERYTHING, INCLUDING MY PLAN TO GET REVENGE ON PUTLER, WILL BE IN VAIN..."

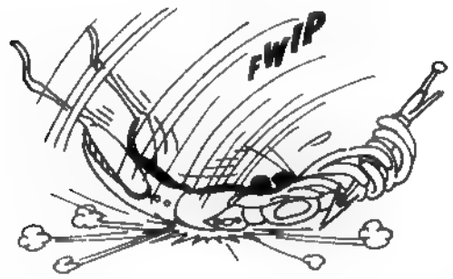


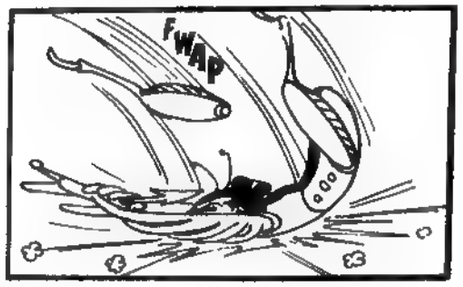

OKAY, I'M READY NOW, PUTLER.
AS YOU KNOW, THIS IS YOUR DESTINY, DR. OHARA...
ACCORDING TO THE RULES, I'M THE ONLY ONE ALLOWED A WEAPON.
I KNOW. BUT DON'T FORGET, SOMEDAY YOU, TOO, WILL MEET THE SAME FATE...
THAT MEANS THERE'S A 99 PERCENT CHANCE YOU'LL BE KILLED.
SCARA SHOULD BE ALMOST TRANS-FORMED...
FSSSSH
TEN MINUTES TO GO...
SHHH
OH, HONEY...
WHERE ARE YOU? I... I FEEL STRANGE...
PREPARE TO DIE, OHARA!
SPROING

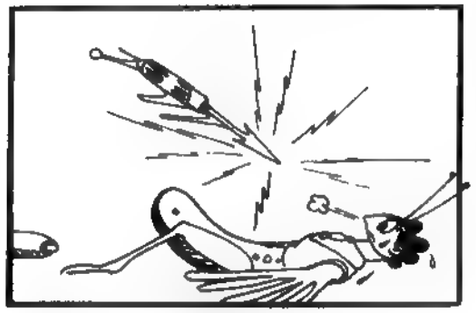

ZAP ZAP ZAP ZAP
NO USE RESISTING WITHOUT A WEAPON, OHARA! DO US BOTH A FAVOR AND GIVE UP!
SPROING
SMASH
ARGH!
UH OH!
SOME-TIMES THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS...
NOT SO FAST, OHARA. THE WEAPON'S STILL MINE!
IT DOES AS I SAY!
FWIP
?




GIVE UP, PAL... IT'S A REMOTE CONTROL GUN! HEH HEH!


FWIP


FWAP




IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE, OHARA!

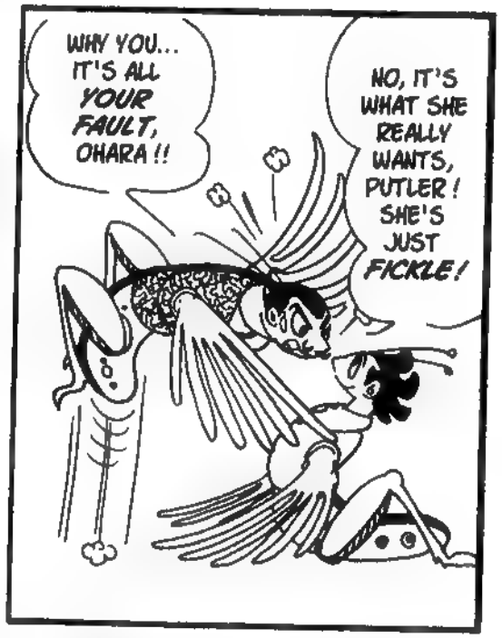

WAIT A SEC... SCARA MIGHT BE SAYING THAT, TOO...
ULP!

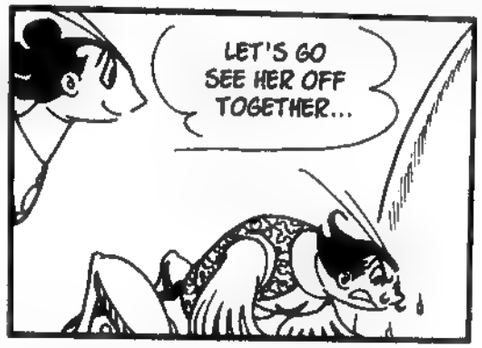

OH NO! SCARA!

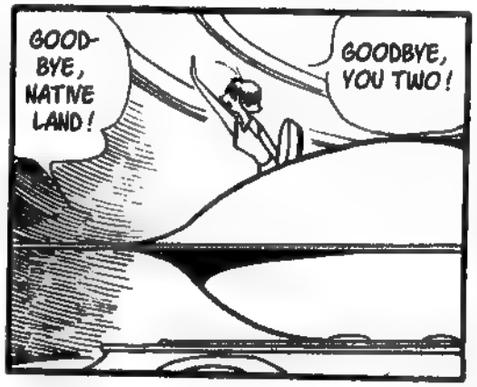

SCARA! W... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HI, MR. PUTLER. I'VE CHANGED MY MIND AGAIN AND DECIDED TO GO LIVE ON A WONDERFUL NEW PLANET...

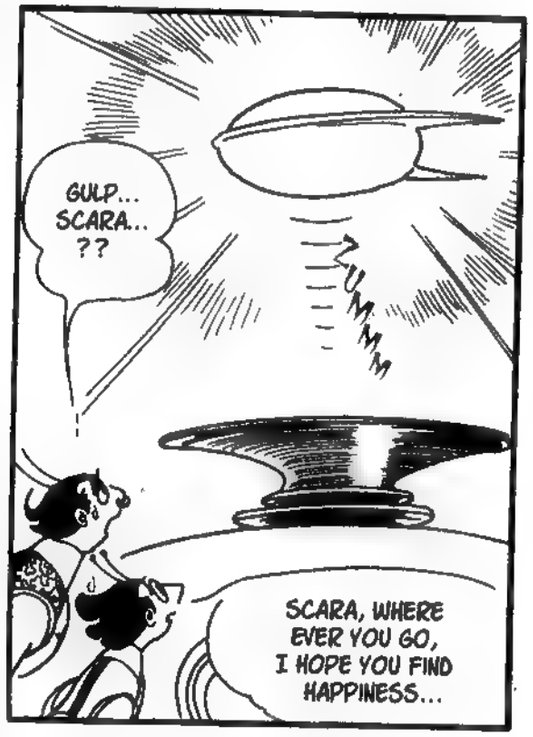

"NEW PLANET" P!!? B... BUT YOU CAN'T DO THAT! WHAT ABOUT OUR AGREE-MENT!?
GOODBYE, MR. PUTLER. THE ROCKET SHIP'S ABOUT TO LEAVE...

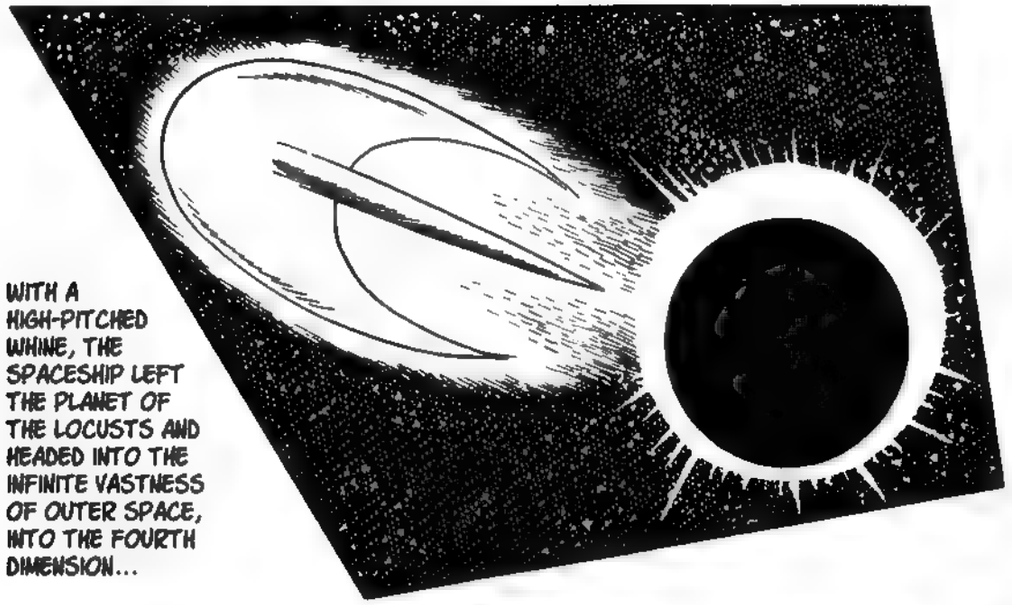

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...


WHY YOU... IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT, OHARA!!
NO, IT'S WHAT SHE REALLY WANTS, PUTLER! SHE'S JUST FICKLE!

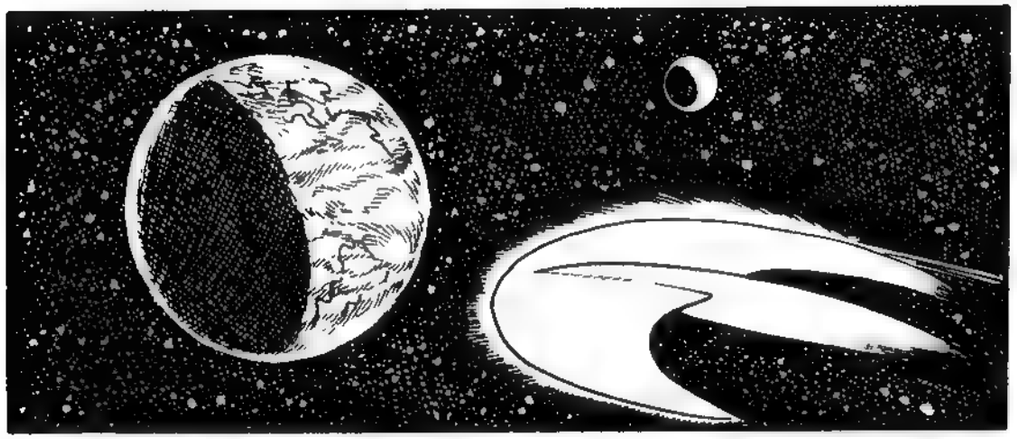

LET'S GO SEE HER OFF TOGETHER...


GOOD-BYE, NATIVE LAND!
GOODBYE, YOU TWO!

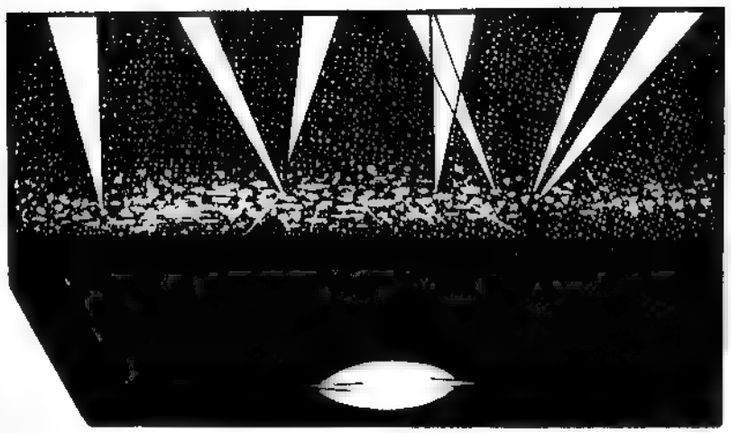

GULP... SCARA... ??
ZUMMM
SCARA, WHERE EVER YOU GO, I HOPE YOU FIND HAPPINESS...



WITH A HIGH-PITCHED WHINE, THE SPACESHIP LEFT THE PLANET OF THE LOCUSTS AND HEADED INTO THE INFINITE VASTNESS OF OUTER SPACE, INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION...

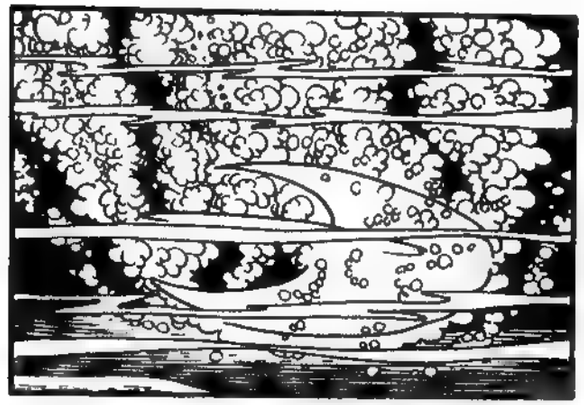


THE SHIP FINALLY REACHED *EARTH*, AND FAR IN THE DISTANCE SPOTTED A HUGE CLUSTER OF BRIGHTLY SHINING LIGHTS. IT WAS THE METROPOLIS OF *TOKYO*.



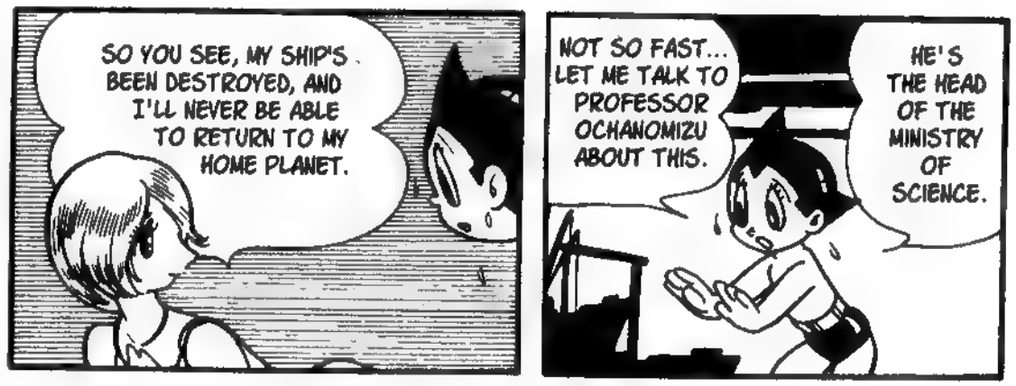
THE SPACESHIP PLUNGED INTO THE WATERS OF TOKYO BAY, BUT AS IT DID SO IT WAS ***IRREPARABLY DAMAGED*** BY THE FORCE OF THE IMPACT AND THE WATER PRESSURE.

SCARA, ONLY HALF-CONSCIOUS, PRESSED HER BODY AGAINST THE ESCAPE VALVE, AND JUST IN TIME MADE IT OUT OF THE SHIP INSIDE A GIANT AIR BUBBLE.





IT WAS THEN THAT THE HUGE EXPLOSION DESCRIBED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY TOOK PLACE...


SO YOU SEE, MY SHIP'S BEEN DESTROYED, AND I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN TO MY HOME PLANET.
NOT SO FAST... LET ME TALK TO PROFESSOR OCHANOMIZU ABOUT THIS.
HE'S THE HEAD OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE.

DON'T MOVE. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

IT'S AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING *ALIENS*!

THIS IS *TERRIBLE*...

BUT THE PROFESSOR'S USED TO PROBLEMS WITH ALIENS...

I BET HE CAN THINK OF SOME WAY TO HELP HER...

WHAT THE—?!

THE *MINISTRY OF SCIENCE* IS SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, BUT IT'S *GONE*!!

AND SO'S THE *MINISTRY OF ATOMIC ENERGY* AND THE *DEPARTMENT OF PRECISION MACHINERY*, WHERE I WAS BORN!

THERE'S NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF OLD HOTELS...

IMPERIAL HOTEL

GOSH, WHAT'S THAT?

UM.. 'SCUSE ME, SIR...

WOW, YOU'RE NEARLY *NAKED*!!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, WANDERING AROUND A PLACE LIKE THIS AT NIGHT, LOOKING LIKE THAT?

YOU ONE OF THOSE AVANT GARDE ARTISTS WHO WALKS AROUND TOWN NAKED THESE DAYS?

NO, SIR, I'M NOT... I'M A ROBOT.

ROBOT?! HAH! *THAT'S* A GOOD ONE!

YOU SHOULDN'T JOSH YER ELDERS LIKE THAT, SONNY!

IF YER NOT CAREFUL, YOU MIGHT CATCH A COLD...

HERE, TRY SOME OF MY RAMEN.

"RAMEN"? YOU MEAN NOODLES?

SORRY, MISTER... I CAN'T EAT NOODLES...

DON'T LIKE 'EM, EH?

IT'S NOT THAT. I'D HAVE TO WASH OUT MY STOMACH LATER...

YER NOT MAKING A WHOLE LOT OF SENSE, KID...

WE ROBOTS AREN'T DESIGNED TO EAT FOOD LIKE THIS!

THIS IS RIDI-CULOUS!

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, SONNY...

...EVERYONE AROUND HERE SAYS I MAKE THE BEST RAMEN!

'N I'M GIVIN' IT TO YOU FOR *FREE*!

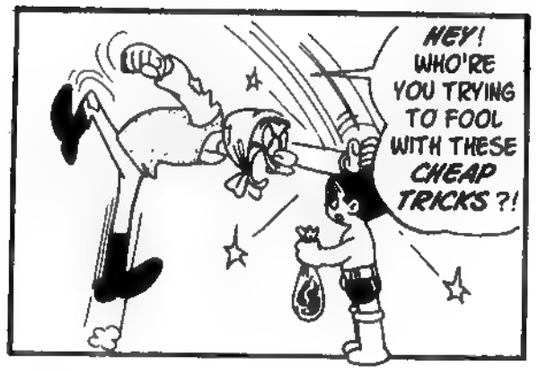
SO EAT UP! *NOW*!

WELL?

ER, IT WAS GREAT...

?

HERE'S THE RAMEN I JUST ATE. IT'S STILL GOOD, SO I'M GIVING IT BACK TO YOU...


HEY! WHO'RE YOU TRYING TO FOOL WITH THESE CHEAP TRICKS?!

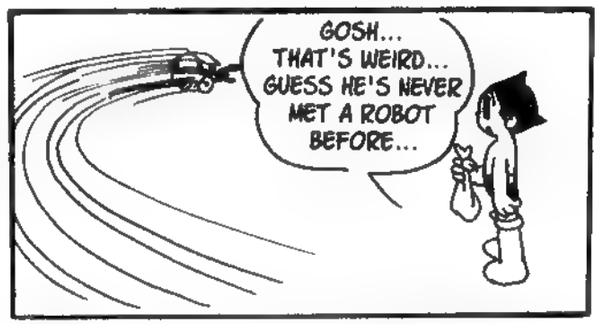

OUCH !!!
THAT'S A HARD HEAD!

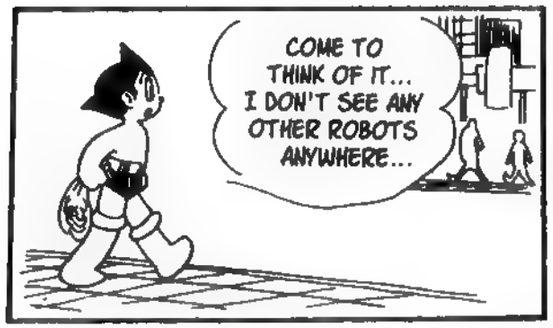

Ulp...






HE'S EITHER A DOLL OR A MONSTER...


GOSH... THAT'S WEIRD... GUESS HE'S NEVER MET A ROBOT BEFORE...


COME TO THINK OF IT... I DON'T SEE ANY OTHER ROBOTS ANYWHERE...




LOOKIT THAT KID WALKIN' ROUND NAKED, MAMA!
HA HA!


WANT SOME RAMEN, SONNY?


THANK YOU, KIND SIR...
SAY, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE DATE IS...?


SURE... IT'S MARCH 3, MISTER.
IT'S 1969!


WHAT?!!
1969?


B... BUT THIS CAN'T BE!!!
I WAS JUST IN 2017!


HEY! HOW COME IT'S FIFTY YEARS OFF? WHAT AM I DOING IN THE PAST?!
?


GOSH, YOU MUST BE A REAL DUMMY...
IF THIS IS REALLY 1969...


...NOTHING MAKES SENSE ANY-MORE!


WHAT A WEIRDO!


WELL...
MAYBE HE'S GOT THAT AMNESIA THING PEOPLE TALK ABOUT...

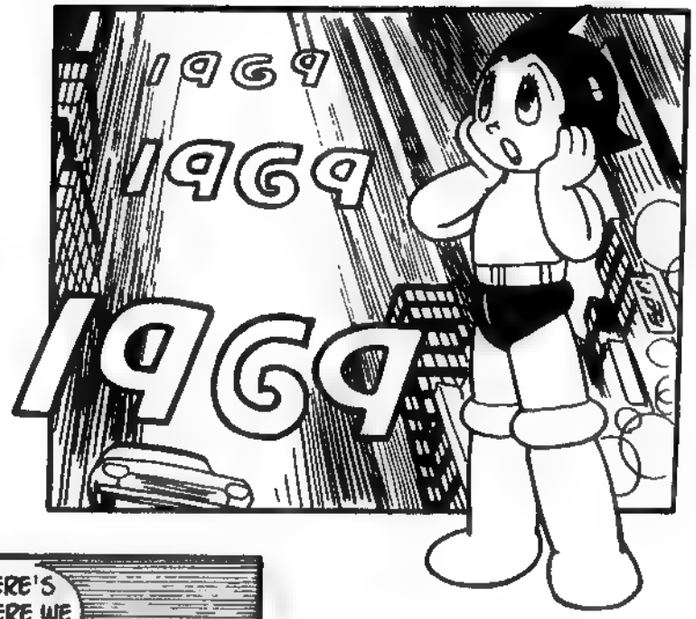

HEY, I'M SHIN-CHAN. WHY DON'T YOU COME HOME WITH US? WE CAN TALK THERE MORE...


HANG ON A SEC... I'VE GOTTA CHANGE FIRST.


THANKS FOR WAITING!


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR RAGS?
SHH! THESE ARE MY COMMUTE CLOTHES.

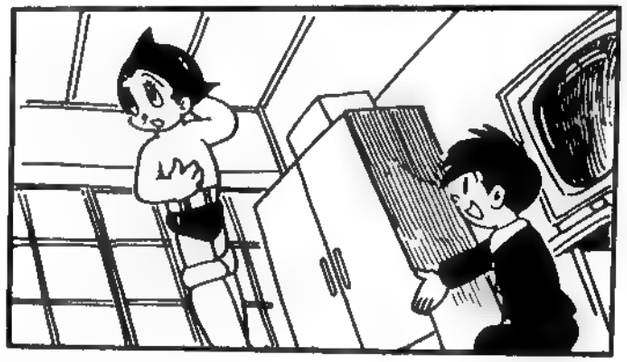
ASTRO TRIED HARD TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON. HE KNEW HE HAD BEEN IN 2017 BEFORE THE EXPLOSION. COULD HE POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN ***BLOWN BACK*** IN TIME TO 1969 BY ITS FORCE? HE DESPERATELY WANTED SOMEONE TO TELL HIM THE ANSWER.

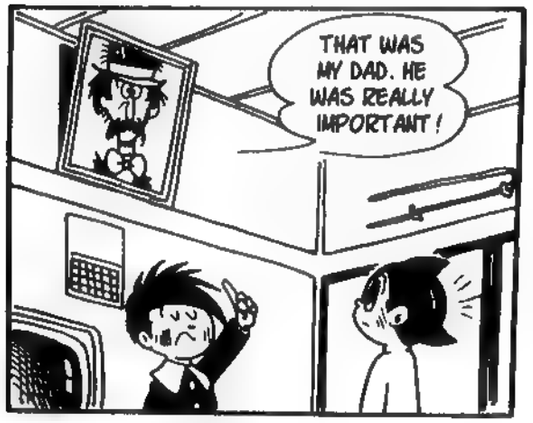




ASTRO ENTERED THE HOUSE AS INVITED BY THE BOY, AND HE COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE HIS EYES. THEY HAD BEEN BEGGING ON THE STREET, SO HE IMAGINED THEY LIVED IN A RUN-DOWN HOVEL...

BUT THEY HAD A FINE HOUSE WITH A GATE AND EVERYTHING. INSIDE, THEY HAD BIG CLOSETS AND DRESSERS AND A TV SET. IT WAS JUST LIKE THE HOUSES MIDDLE-CLASS SALARIED WORKERS LIVED IN...





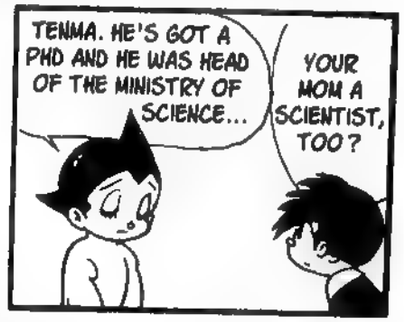
"HAVE A SEAT! I KNOW YOU'RE SHOCKED, BUT IT REALLY IS OUR HOUSE. DAD BUILT IT AFTER THIRTY YEARS OF BEGGING ON THE STREETS AND SAVING HIS PENNIES. HE WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL HOMELESS FEDERATION."



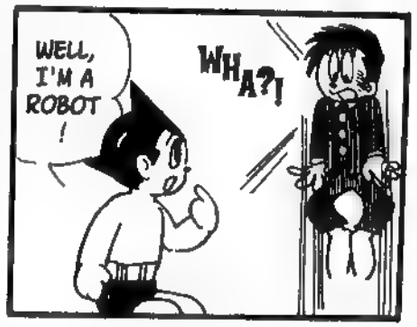


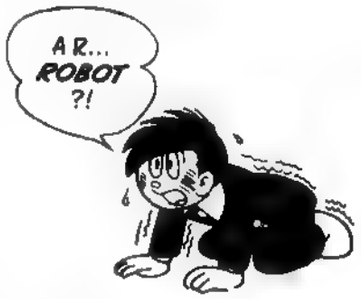








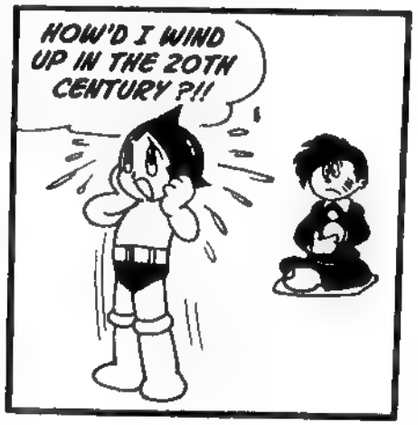














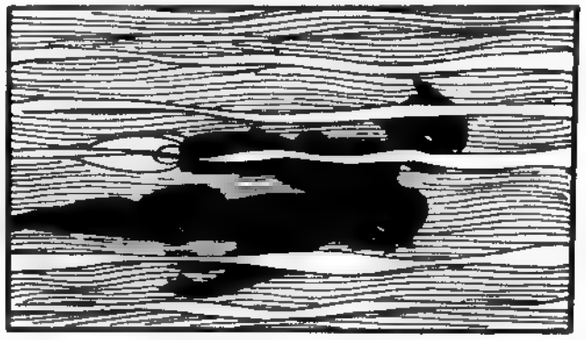


HAD ASTRO BEEN A HUMAN, HE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE FAINTED FROM THE SHOCK OF BEING IN THE WRONG TIME...

HE FLEW BACK TO THE BAY, PICKED UP SCARA, AND TOOK OFF AGAIN.

"WHERE ARE WE GOING?" SHE ASKED. "TO PROFESSOR OCHANOMIZU?"

"HE DOESN'T EXIST YET!" ASTRO REPLIED, SOUNDING AS THOUGH HE WOULD BURST INTO TEARS. "WE'RE GOING TO MY HOME."



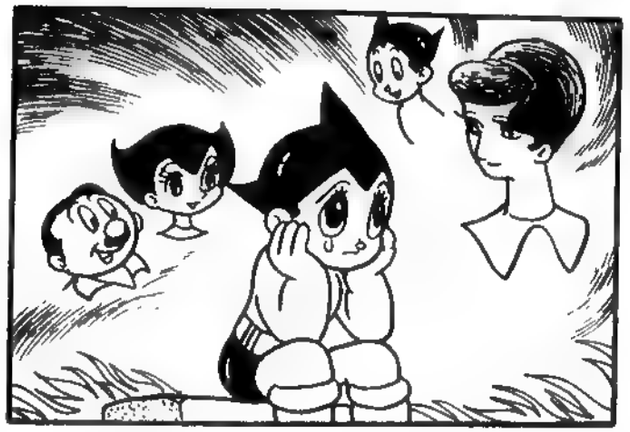
"TO YOUR HOME?" SCARA PERSISTED. "IS IT IN THIS CITY?"

"IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE," ASTRO REPLIED, FEELING TENSE JUST AS THEY LANDED.

THE SITE OF HIS OLD HOME WAS OVERGROWN WITH GRASS, AND THERE WAS NOT A SOUL AROUND. IT WAS A VACANT LOT, THE GROUND NEGLECTED AND EXPOSED...

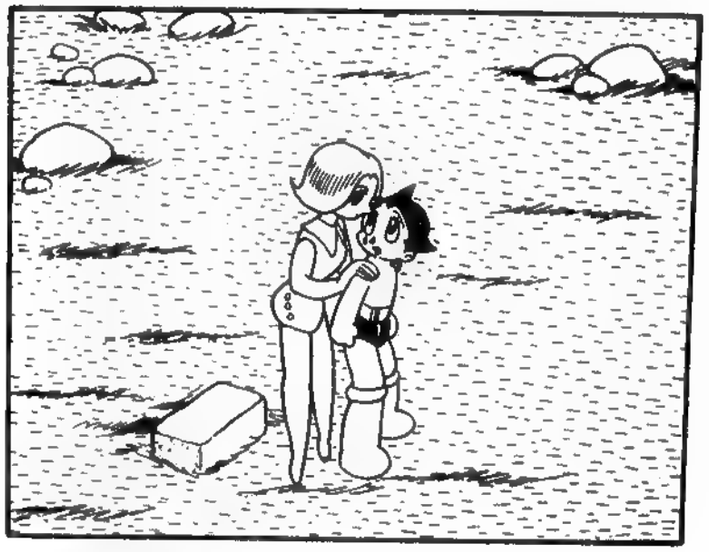






"IF I WAIT FIFTY YEARS, MY HOUSE'LL BE HERE, AND I CAN LIVE HAPPILY WITH MY MOM 'N DAD AND URAN AND COBALT. BUT LONG BEFORE THEN I'LL ***RUN OUT OF ENERGY*** AND TURN INTO ***LIFELESS JUNK***... I'LL BE TAKEN TO THE DUMP OR CHOPPED UP FOR PARTS..."

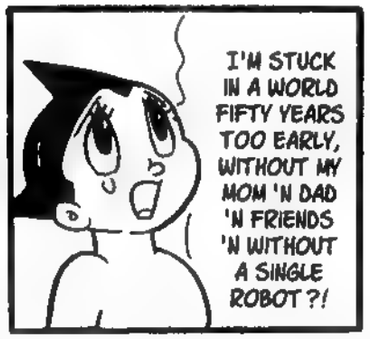
TEARS FELL FROM ASTRO'S EYES. EVEN ROBOTS FEEL SADNESS, AND ASTRO HAD ARTIFICIAL TEAR DUCTS BUILT INTO HIS EYES, WITH WATER DESIGNED TO COME OUT OF THEM. SCARA CAME UP QUIETLY BEHIND HIM AND PUT HER ARMS ON HIS SHOULDERS...





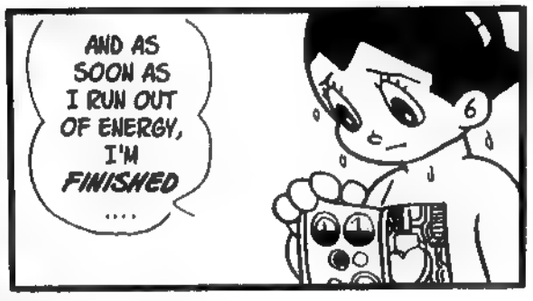
WHEN ASTRO COMPLAINED THAT HE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAD HAPPENED, SCARA REPLIED, "I DON'T KNOW WHY, ASTRO, BUT MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE THERE WAS A TIME TRANSPORT DEVICE IN MY SPACE SHIP. WHEN IT EXPLODED, MAYBE WE WERE ACCIDENTALLY TOSSED INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION. WE IMMEDIATELY CAME BACK TO THE SAME PLACE WE WERE IN, BUT MAYBE THE TIME WAS OFF BY FIFTY YEARS..."

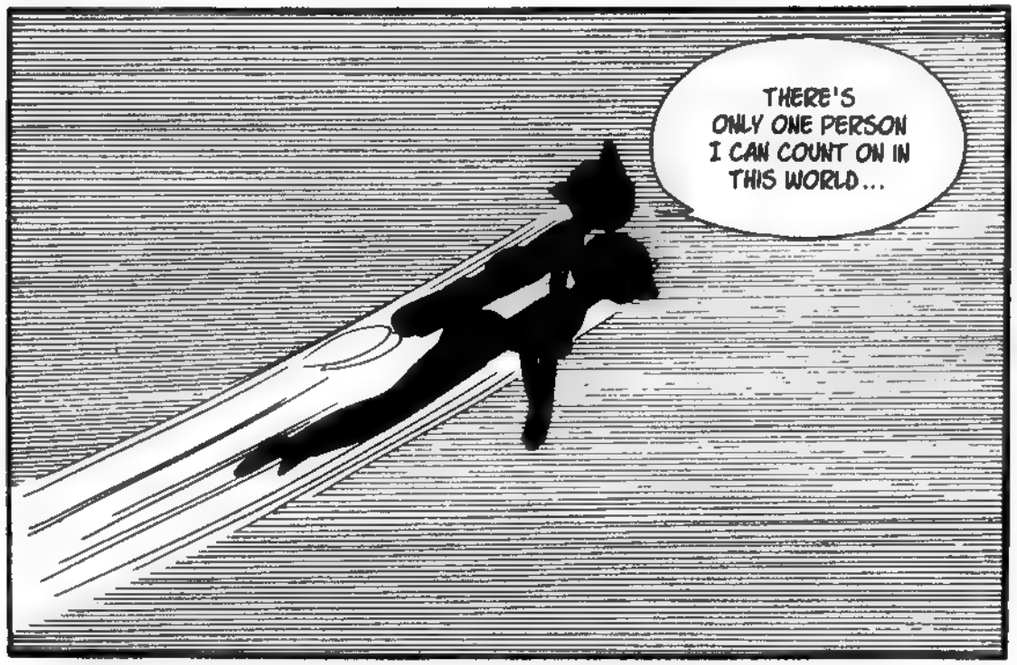






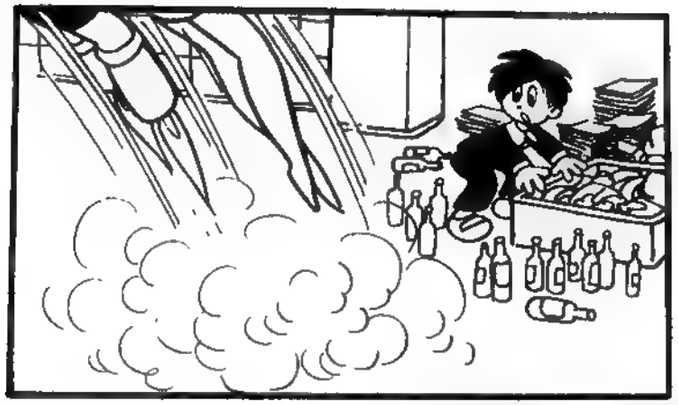








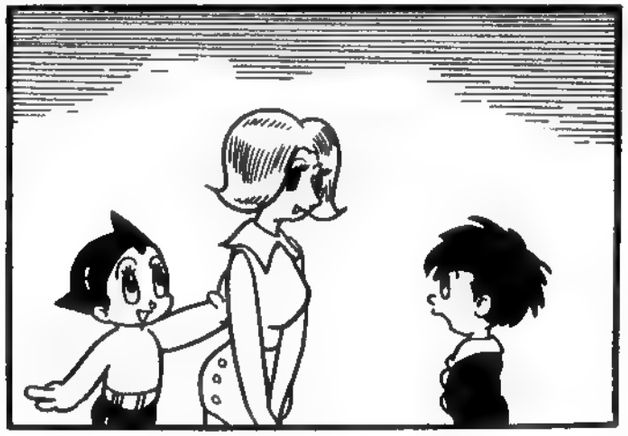
LIVING ON EARTH, 101



ASTRO'S FRIEND SHIN-CHAN WAS BUSY SORTING JUNK IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE. HE ALSO WENT BY THE NICKNAME OF "*OVERPASS MANGA MAN*," NOT BECAUSE HE WAS A CARTOON CHARACTER, BUT BECAUSE HE WAS ALWAYS SITTING UNDER THE OVERPASS READING COMIC BOOKS...

SHIN-CHAN WAS ASTONISHED WHEN ASTRO AND SCARA SUDDENLY LANDED IN FRONT OF HIM. "WHAT?" HE SAID, "YOU'RE STILL HERE? YOU MEAN YOU COULDN'T GO BACK TO THE FUTURE?"

"THAT'S RIGHT..." ASTRO SADLY REPLIED.





"YOU POOR KID," SHIN-CHAN SAID, TRYING TO CONSOLE HIM. WHEN ASTRO EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO LIVE IN SHIN-CHAN'S WORLD, SHIN-CHAN TRIED TO ENCOURAGE HIM, TELLING HIM THAT IT WASN'T SUCH A BAD TIME AND THAT IT WAS IN FACT FAIRLY EASY TO MAKE ENDS MEET AS A BEGGAR. THEN, STARING AT SCARA, HE ASKED, "BUT WHO'S THE LADY WITH YOU?"

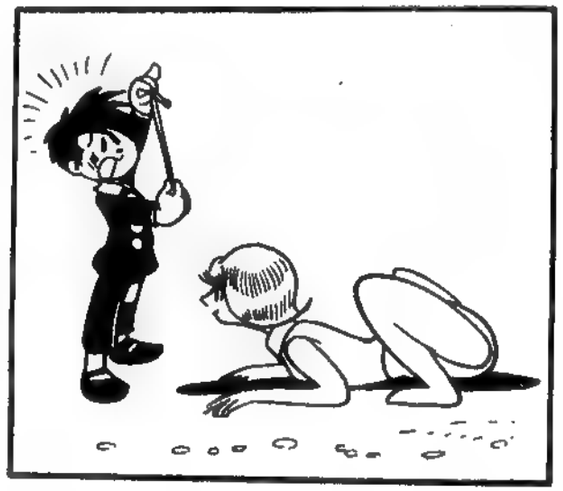
"BEFORE I EXPLAIN," ASTRO REPLIED, "DON'T YOU HAVE SOMETHING SHE COULD WEAR?"

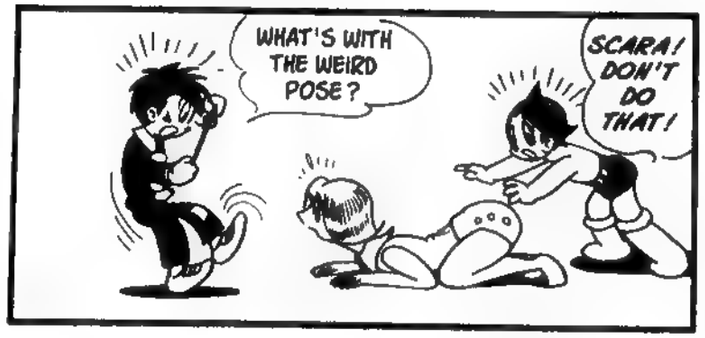
"WHY NOT BUY HER SOME CLOTHES AT A STORE?"

"WELL, I CAN'T... AND THERE'S A REASON..."

"*HM*. ALL OUR CLOTHES HERE ARE IN TATTERS, BUT WE'VE GOT SOME CLOTH. MAYBE WE CAN MAKE HER SOMETHING... LET'S MEASURE HER..."

SCARA IMMEDIATELY GOT DOWN ON ALL FOURS. SHIN-CHAN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.



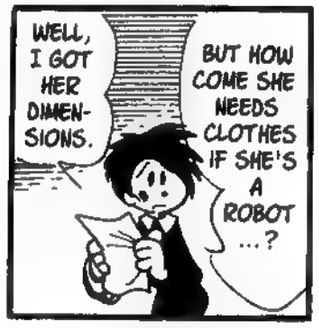
















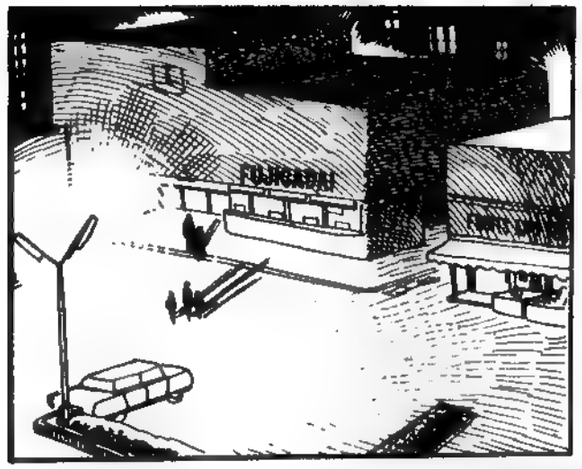




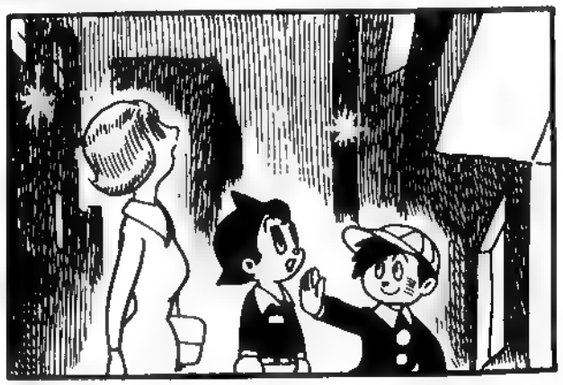


SNIP
SNAP
OH MY GOSH ...
WHY ARE YOU SHREDDING EVERYTHING?
THIS IS HOW I ALWAYS MAKE CLOTHES...
THERE, THIS'LL DO...
STAND BACK A BIT...
WHA P!
WHAT'S GOING ON, ASTRO?
UM... SHE'S EMITTING ELECTRIC WAVES ...
WOW! HER BODY'S SUCKING UP THE CLOTH SHREDS ...
...LIKE A VACUUM CLEANER!
THE SHREDS ARE COVERING HER PERFECTLY ...
YOU THINK MY HEM'S LONG ENOUGH?
YOU A WITCH LIKE IN THE BEWITCHED TV SHOW, LADY?
THAT'S AMAZING ...

NO, I JUST USE MY BODY HEAT TO MELT THE FIBERS IN THE CLOTH AROUND ME. THIS WAY I GET A PERFECT FIT!
IT'S OKAY WITH ME, ASTRO, BUT IF SHE DOES STUFF LIKE THIS IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLE, THEY'LL GO NUTS!
THEY'LL RAISE A FUSS ABOUT ROBOTS AND WITCHES BEING IN THEIR MIDST!
IT'S A BIG DEAL TO ADULTS, YOU KNOW!
BASICALLY, BOTH OF YOU HAVE TO ACT MORE LIKE REGULAR PEOPLE...
BUT WE'RE NOT!
AND PEOPLE'LL KNOW...
...THE MOMENT THEY SEE ME.
YEAH, THEY'LL KNOW FROM YOUR HEAD. NOT A REAL HAIR ON IT...
BUT MAYBE WE CAN FOOL 'EM...
HANG ON A SEC, MAYBE WE'VE GOT SOMETHING THAT'LL WORK ....
...LIKE THESE WIGS ...
HMM. THAT'S FOR LADIES...
THAT'S FOR ADULT MEN...
THAT'S A VAGABOND SAMURAI...



THERE IS A SMALL TRAIN STATION CALLED FUJIGADAI, ABOUT AN HOUR'S CLICKETY-CLACK, CROWDED RIDE FROM THE CENTER OF TOKYO. IT'S IN THE OUTER SUBURBS, SO AT NIGHT THE SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE STATION IS QUITE DESERTED, BUT THIS IS WHERE ASTRO, SCARA, AND SHIN-CHAN NEXT SHOWED UP...



"I KNOW AN OLD GUY WHO RUNS AN APARTMENT BUILDING HERE," SAID SHIN-CHAN, "... AND YOU CAN PROB'LY LIVE IN IT."

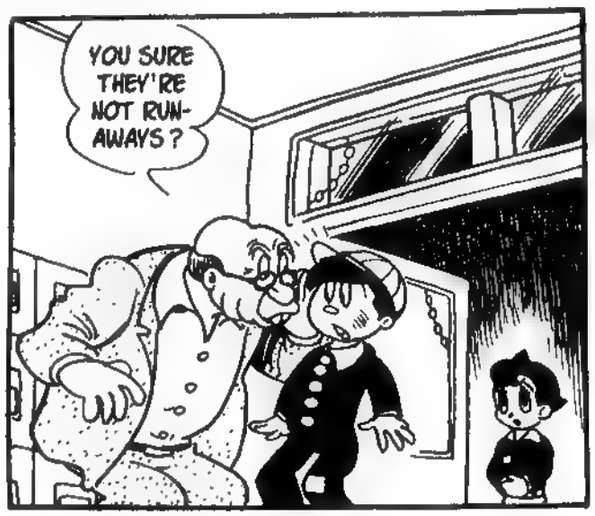
"WHAT'S AN APARTMENT?" SCARA QUERIED. "IS IT LIKE A HOUSE?"



SHIN-CHAN COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT SCARA DIDN'T KNOW WHAT AN APARTMENT WAS. AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH CROWDED BACKSTREETS, HE ADDED, "IT'S NOT VERY CLEAN, BUT IT'S REALLY CHEAP..."

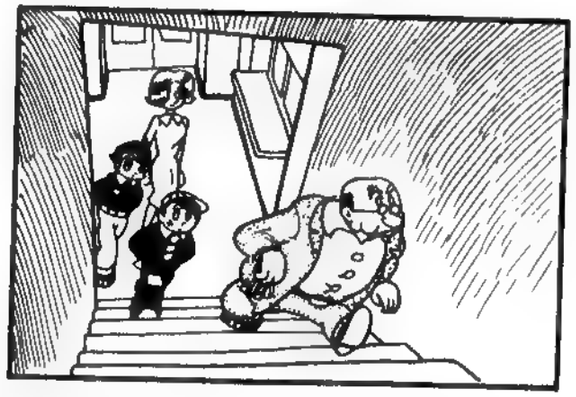
THEY ARRIVED IN FRONT OF A RUN-DOWN APARTMENT BUILDING WITH A SIGN ON IT THAT SAID *NASUBI-SO*, OR "EGGPLANT PALACE." SHIN-CHAN YELLED OUT, "HEY, POPS!" WHEREUPON THE OWNER--A MIDDLE-AGED MAN WITH GLASSES SLIPPING OFF HIS NOSE--APPEARED AND SAID--

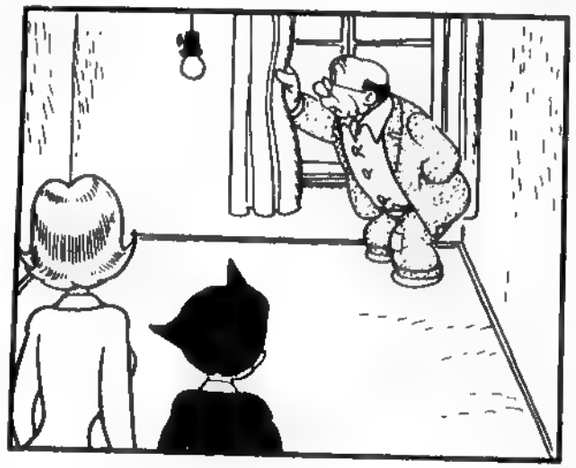
"YOU AGAIN, EH? I GOT THE PHONE CALL. SO THIS THE BROTHER AND SISTER YOU MENTIONED WHO'RE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE, EH?"



SHIN-CHAN ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY ROOMS AVAILABLE. THE MAN LOOKED AT SCARA SUSPICIOUSLY OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYES, AND REPLIED...

"...WELL, YES, BUT WE ONLY RENT TO *TRUSTWORTHY* TENANTS..."



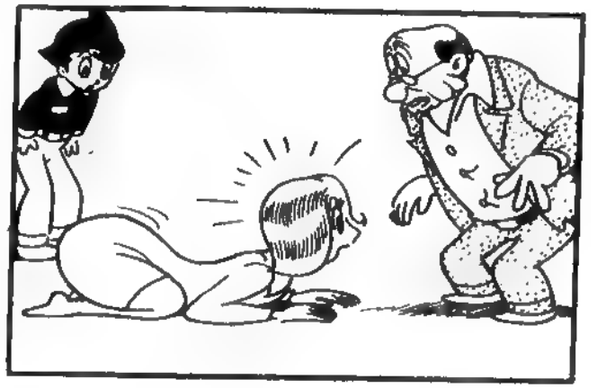


IT WAS EARLY SPRING, BUT COMING TO RENT A ROOM AT NIGHT, WITH NO COAT ON AND NO HANDBAG, WAS BOUND TO AROUSE SUSPICION.

THE TRIO FOLLOWED THE MAN UP THE BUILDING'S CREAKY STAIRS AND WATCHED AS HE OPENED ONE OF THE ROOMS WITH A KEY. BOASTING THAT "IT'S GOT GOOD SUNLIGHT," HE SHOWED THEM INSIDE. IT WAS A TINY, FOUR-AND-A-HALF TATAMI-MAT ROOM, THE STRAW MATS DISCOLORED FROM AGE AND COVERED WITH DUST.

SHIN-CHAN WHISPERED IN ASTRO'S EAR--

"THE OLD GUY USED TO BE A BEGGAR LIKE ME, BUT HE EARNED ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY THIS PLACE. HE SEEMS A LITTLE ODD, BUT DON'T WORRY, HE'S REALLY A GOOD FELLOW."





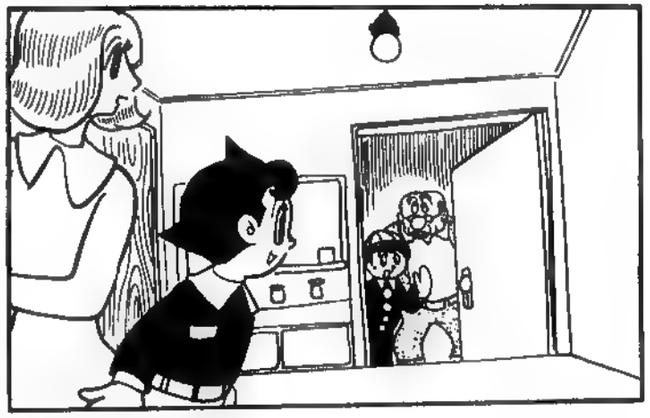
"WELL, WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?" THE MANAGER ASKED THE TRIO. SCARA IMMEDIATELY GOT DOWN ON THE FLOOR MATS ON ALL FOURS. THE MANAGER LOOKED AT HER IN SHOCK, AND QUICKLY TOOK SHIN-CHAN ASIDE OUT OF THE ROOM AND WHISPERED, "MAYBE SHE'S DRUNK?"

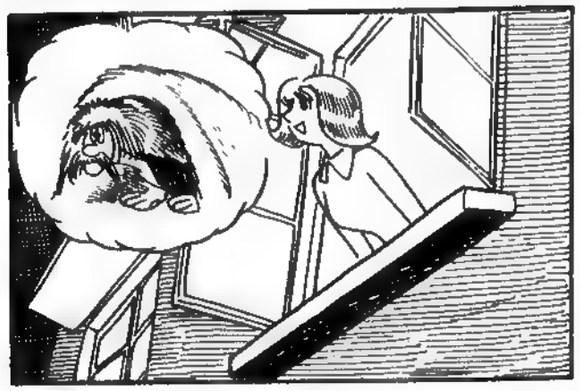
"SO YOU WANT THE ROOM, RIGHT?" SHIN-CHAN SAID TO ASTRO.

"SURE, WE'LL TAKE IT," ASTRO ANSWERED.

"GOOD," SHIN-CHAN REPLIED. "I'LL GO BACK HOME AND BRING YOU STUFF YOU'LL NEED, LIKE AN OLD FUTON, DESK, AND TEA KETTLE."

SHIN-CHAN AND THE OWNER THEN PARTED FROM ASTRO AND SCARA. ASTRO TURNED TO SCARA AND COMMENTED, "GOSH, SHIN-CHAN SURE IS A NICE GUY..."





"YES," SHE REPLIED, "FOR SUCH A PRIMITIVE PERSON."

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN?" ASTRO SAID.

"WELL, HE LEADS SUCH A PRIMITIVE LIFE," SAID SCARA. "LOOK AT THIS ROOM. IT'S OKAY, I SUPPOSE, IF YOU REALIZE IT'S WHERE PRIMITIVES DWELL..."

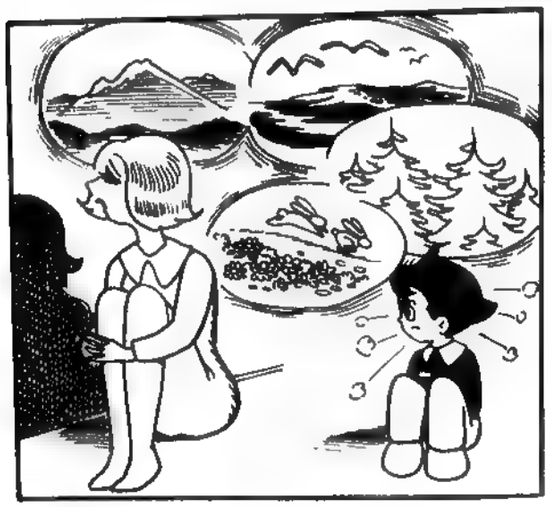
ASTRO WAS UPSET BY THIS, AND RETORTED, "WELL, I'M SURE THERE *ARE* BETTER PLACES *SOMEWHERE*..."

"LET'S GO THERE THEN," SAID SCARA.

"BUT WE'D PROBABLY NEED A LOT MORE MONEY."

"MONEY?" SCARA WAS TAKEN ABACK. "I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THAT!"





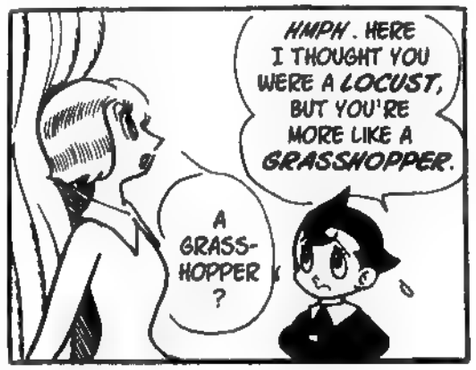
"WORK?" SCARA SAID. "ME?! I DON'T WANT TO WORK. I CAME HERE TO WALK AROUND IN THE MOUNTAINS AND FIELDS, AND SEE THE RIVERS, OCEANS, AND FORESTS... I WANT TO ENJOY MYSELF!"











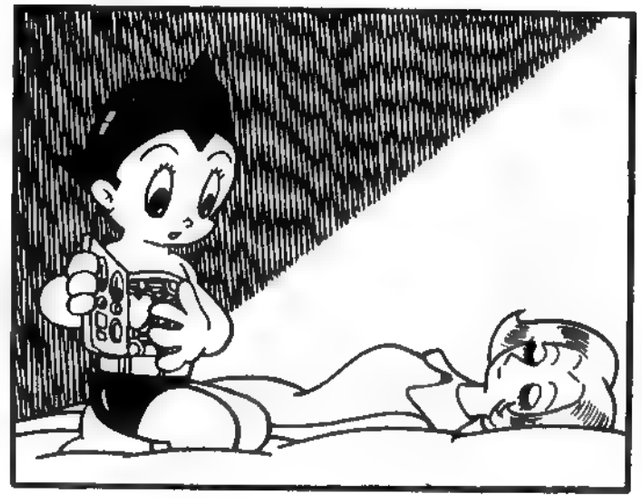

"YEAH, THERE'S A CHILDREN'S STORY WHERE THE GRASSHOPPER PLAYS ALL SUMMER LONG, AND HAS TO HAVE ANTS HELP HIM WHEN WINTER COMES."
GOODNESS! I LIKE THAT!

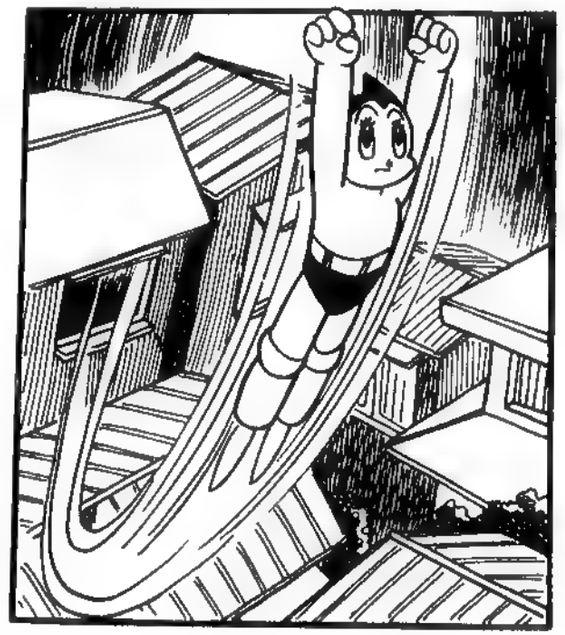

EVENING! I BROUGHT THE STUFF!
SHHH!
QUIET, IT'S LATE!
OOPS! SORRY...
BAM CRASH BAM BOMP
STOP THE RACKET!!
WILL YA SHADDAP ALREADY? I'M TRYIN' TA SLEEP!
THIS IS ALL JUNK, BUT IT'LL COME IN HANDY!
GOSH, THANKS, SHIN-CHAN!
WELL, I'LL SEE YA LATER. LEMME KNOW TOMORROW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING MORE...
SO HOW DOES *HE* MAKE A LIVING?
HE'S A BEG-GAR ...
WELL, MAYBE I COULD BEG, TOO...



ASTRO AND SCARA CLOSED THE ROOM'S LACE CURTAINS, PULLED OUT THE FUTON, LAY DOWN, AND FELL SOUNDLY ASLEEP. THE LIGHT OF THE MOON SHOWN THROUGH THE WINDOW AND GENTLY ILLUMINATED THEIR FACES AS THEY DREAMED.

ASTRO WOKE AS DAWN APPROACHED. SCARA WAS STILL SLEEPING PEACEFULLY, BUT HE CHECKED HIS ENERGY LEVEL. HE REALIZED THAT IF HE WERE CAREFUL, HE MIGHT BE OKAY FOR THREE YEARS.





AFTER THINKING A WHILE, ASTRO SUDDENLY OPENED THE WINDOW AND FLEW UP INTO THE NIGHT SKY. UNLESS HE COULD MAKE SOME MONEY BY MORNING, HE KNEW THEY'D BE IN TROUBLE...

ANYWHERE WILL DO...

ALL I NEED'S A GOOD *VOLCANO* ...

YAY! THERE'S ONE!

WOW! IT'S REALLY *ACTIVE!*

WHEN VOL-CANOES ARE FORMED ...

...THE HEAT AND PRESSURE ...

...CREATE *DIAMONDS...*

I LEARNED THAT IN SCHOOL...

THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANT...

DEVIL'S CAULDRON

MUST BE SOME DIAMONDS SOMEWHERE...

RATS! THIS IS JUST QUARTZ!

I KNOW DIAMONDS DON'T ORIGINALLY LOOK LIKE THIS!

THAT'S AFTER A JEWELER CUTS 'EM UP...

SO THAT MEANS ...

...THEY'RE HARDER TO FIND THAN I THOUGHT ...

I'LL EAT SOME ROCKS THAT LOOK LIKE DIA-MONDS ...

AND THEN TAKE 'EM BACK...

WHOOPS!

I SWALLOWED SOME MAGNETIC IRON ORE!

YOW!

CLANK

I'M ATTRACT-ING STUFF!

HELP!

UH OH... I FEEL A TREMOR...

RUMBLE

ROAR

YIKES! MOLTEN LAVA'S SPILLING OUT EVERY-WHERE!

IF THAT STUFF TOUCHES ME, MY ARTIFICIAL SKIN'LL MELT!

TIME TO SCRAM!

SPLOOSH

NOW I'M *REALLY* IN HOT WATER!

NATURAL HOT SPRINGS

KERSPLOOSH

THIS WAY TO POOL

NATURAL HOT SPRINGS

EEEK!

WHOOPS! HEH HEH... MUST BE A SPA...

SORRY, LADIES ...

I PROB'LY SCARED THE HECK OUT OF THEM...

LOOK AT ALL THE STUFF I GOT...

PLOP PLOP

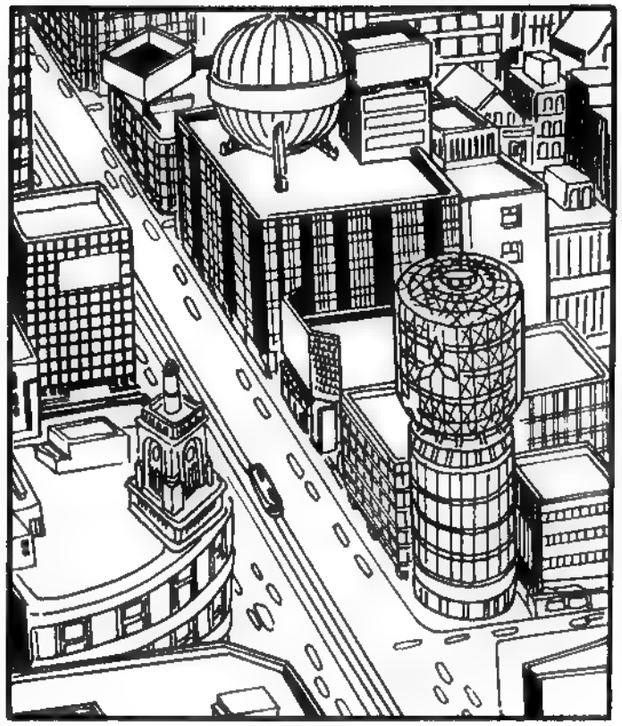
AT LEAST *ONE* OF THESE OUGHTA BE A RAW *DIAMOND.*

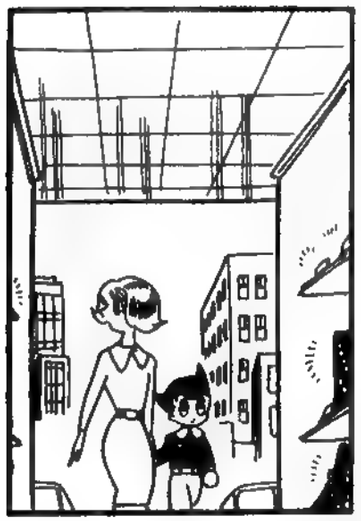
HMM. I HEAR VOICES IN THE MAN-AGER'S ROOM BELOW...

I SWEAR, I JUST SAW A BURGLAR WITH A BARE HAIRY CHEST SLIP THOUGH A WINDOW ON THE FLOOR ... SECOND

IMPOS-SIBLE, YOU IDIOT! THERE'S NOTHING TO STEAL HERE!

THE NEXT DAY ASTRO AND SCARA VISITED TOKYO'S GINZA DISTRICT. IN THE 20TH CENTURY IT WAS AN EXTRAORDINARILY BUSTLING PLACE, AND AS THE TWO OF THEM MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE CROWDS, THEY WERE AMAZED. FOR SCARA, IN PARTICULAR, EVERYTHING SEEMED NEW AND STRANGE.





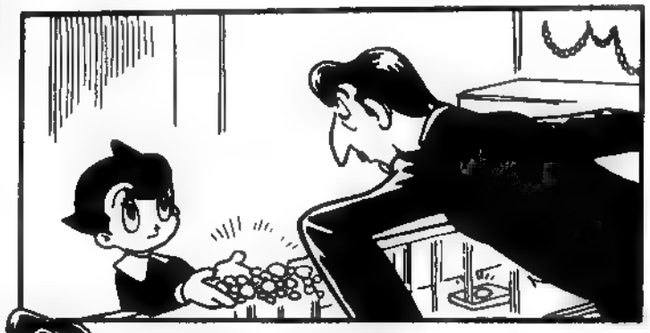
"HERE, THIS IS THE PLACE, SCARA," SAID ASTRO.

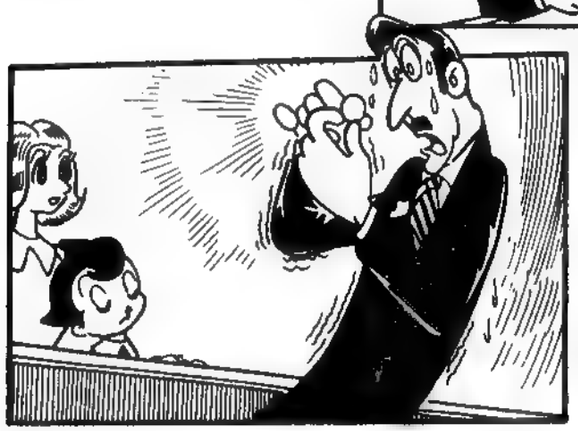
"WHAT IS IT?"

"IT'S A JEWELRY STORE. I'VE GOT SOMETHING I WANT THEM TO BUY..."

"BUT THEY JUST HAVE A BUNCH OF WEIRD ROCKS ON DISPLAY..."

AN EMPLOYEE OF THE STORE CAME OUT, LOOKING VERY SERIOUS. HE STARED AT ASTRO, AND SAID, "WELL, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?"

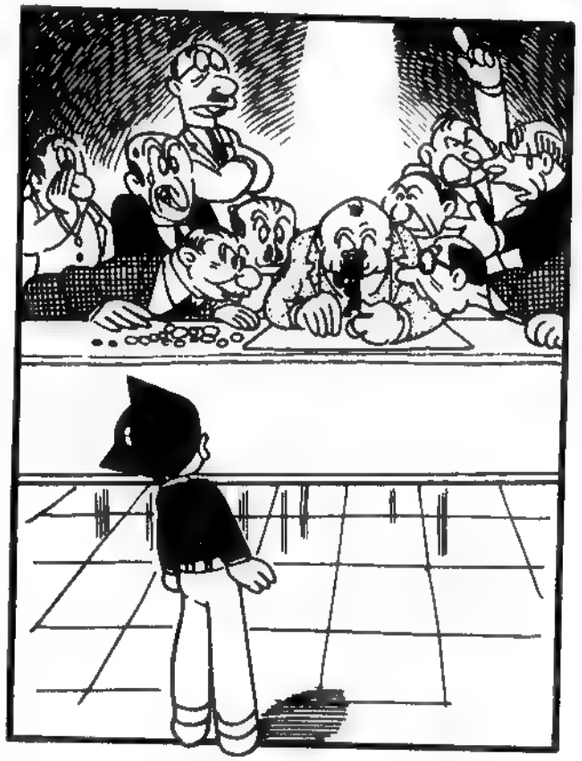




ASTRO SAID HESITANTLY, "*UM*... I, ER, WONDERED IF YOU COULD LOOK AT SOME OF THESE STONES I'VE BROUGHT..." AND THEN HE SPREAD THEM OUT ON THE STORE CASE.

THE STORE EMPLOYEE, WITH A LOOK OF DISDAIN, PICKED UP ONE OF THE STONES, STARED AT IT, AND THEN, WITH HIS VOICE SHAKING, SAID, "WHA-- WHAT HAVE WE GOT HERE?!"





ASTRO COULDN'T STAND STILL ANY LONGER, SO HE BLURTED OUT, "SO WILL YOU BUY THEM, MISTER?"

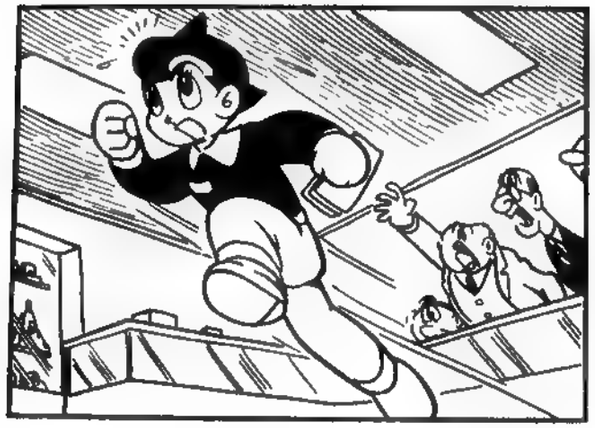
"BUY? THESE ARE ***AMAZING***, SONNY!"

"SO YOU'LL BUY THEM, RIGHT?"

"THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD BUY THEM..." ONE OF THE OTHER MEN SIGHED.

"THEN GIVE THEM BACK," ASTRO BEGGED. "I CAN TAKE THEM TO ANOTHER STORE!"

"SORRY, SONNY... ***NOBODY'S*** GOING TO BUY THESE..."

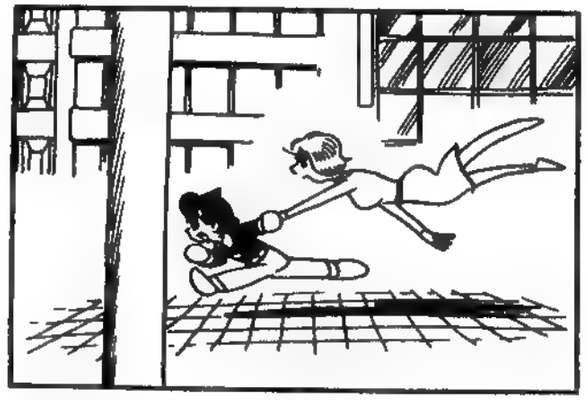


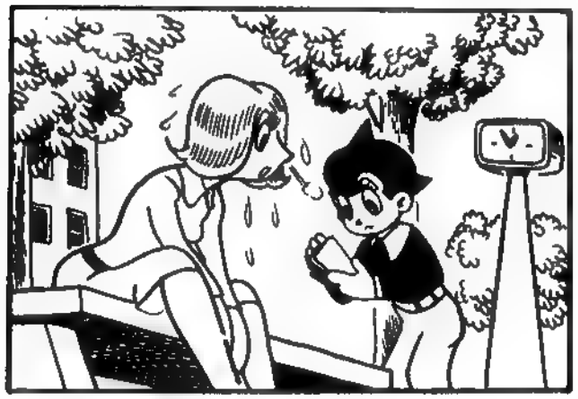
"THESE DIAMONDS ARE SO ***AMAZING*** THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD PRICE THEM. WE'RE GOING TO NEED SOME TIME TO CHECK THEM AND THEN ASK YOU THINGS, LIKE WHERE YOU FOUND THEM."

"BUT I'M IN A HURRY!" ASTRO PLEADED, "IF THEY'RE REALLY DIAMONDS, I NEED YOU TO TELL ME HOW MUCH THEY'RE WORTH!"

"I'D SAY YOU'VE GOT AT LEAST A ***MILLION YEN*** WORTH OF GEMS HERE, SONNY," ONE OF THE DEALERS SAID. "HERE, WE'LL GIVE YOU A LITTLE CASH AS A DOWNPAYMENT..."

AS SOON AS HE WAS HANDED THE MONEY, ASTRO DASHED OUT OF THE STORE WITH SCARA.





WITH THE GEM DEALERS CALLING OUT AFTER THEM TO WAIT, ASTRO AND SCARA RAN LIKE THE WIND TO A LITTLE LOCAL PARK. SCARA, OUT OF BREATH, SAT DOWN ON ONE OF THE BENCHES.

"GOSH, YOU REALLY SURPRISED ME, ASTRO," SHE GASPED.

"SORRY, BUT AT LEAST WE GOT SOME MONEY..."

"SO THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL MONEY?"

"YUP. YOU CAN BUY ANYTHING WITH IT. SO NOW WE CAN GO SHOPPING AT A DEPARTMENT STORE..."

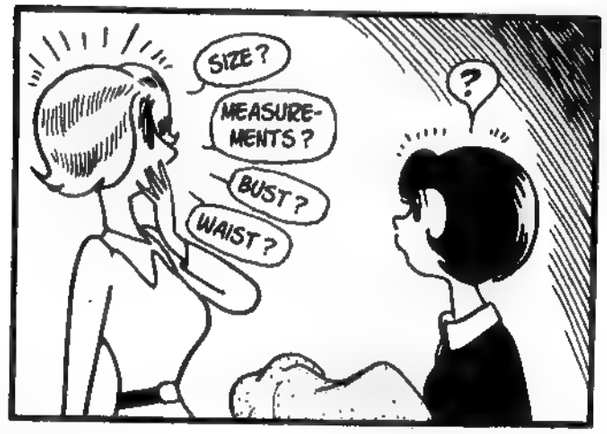
AFTER ENTERING A STORE, ASTRO LED SCARA TO THE WOMEN'S WEAR SECTION, AND HAD HER BUY WHATEVER CLOTHES SHE WANTED.

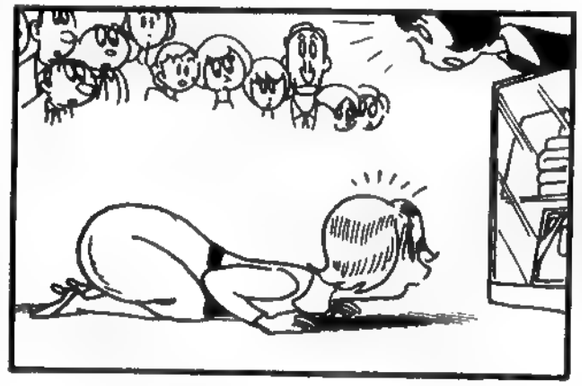


WHEN THE STORE EMPLOYEE ASKED SCARA WHAT SIZE SHE WANTED, SHE REPLIED, "SIZE?"

"YOU KNOW... YOUR MEASUREMENTS... YOUR HEIGHT, WAIST, BUST SIZE... THAT SORT OF THING..."

"BUST? WAIST?" SCARA WAS COMPLETELY CONFUSED.



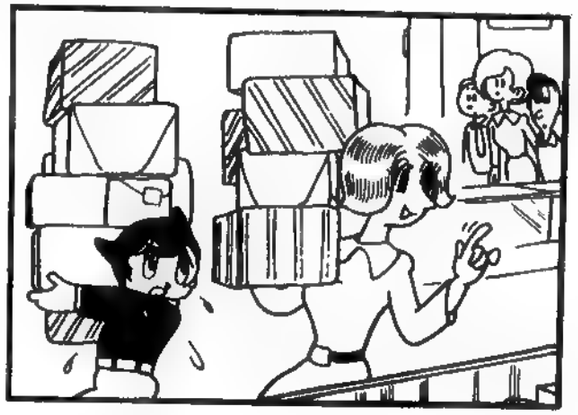


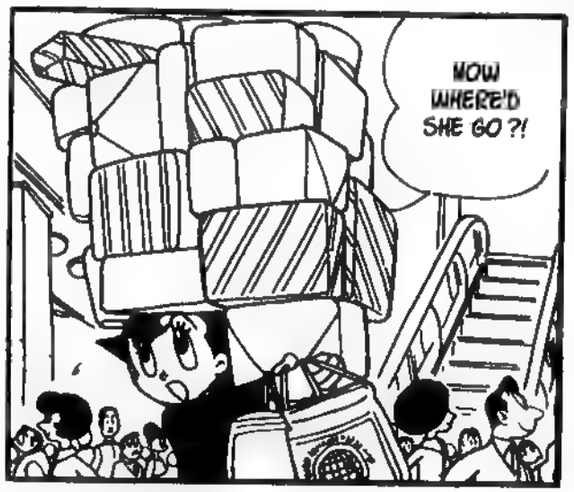
SCARA'S BEAUTIFUL BROW FURROWED. "I'M SORRY," SHE ANSWERED, "I'VE NO IDEA..."

WHEN THE EMPLOYEE OFFERED TO MEASURE SCARA, SHE SAW, TO HER SHOCK, THAT SCARA HAD ALREADY GOTTEN DOWN ON ALL FOURS ON THE FLOOR. "WHAT'S WRONG, MISS?" SHE ASKED, CONCERNED...

"WELL," SCARA REPLIED, "YOU WANTED TO MEASURE ME, SO I WAS JUST TRYING TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU..."

ASTRO CAME OVER HER AND WHISPERED, "LISTEN, SCARA, YOU CAN'T ACT LIKE THAT HERE. WE'RE ON EARTH. DON'T DO THAT IN FRONT OF PEOPLE..."





AFTER MAKING THE ROUNDS OF THE STORE'S VARIOUS SECTIONS, SCARA BEGAN TO REALIZE HOW MUCH FUN SHOPPING COULD BE, AND STARTED EXCLAIMING, "I'LL TAKE ***THIS***... AND ***THIS***, TOO!"

ASTRO WAS AFRAID THINGS WERE GETTING OUT OF CONTROL, BUT WHEN HE NEXT LOOKED, HE COULDN'T SEE SCARA ANYWHERE.



YELLING, *"SCARA! WHERE ARE YOU?!"* AND BALANCING A HUGE PILE OF HER PURCHASES, ASTRO SEARCHED ALL OVER FOR HER. "I WONDER IF SHE GOT LOST?"

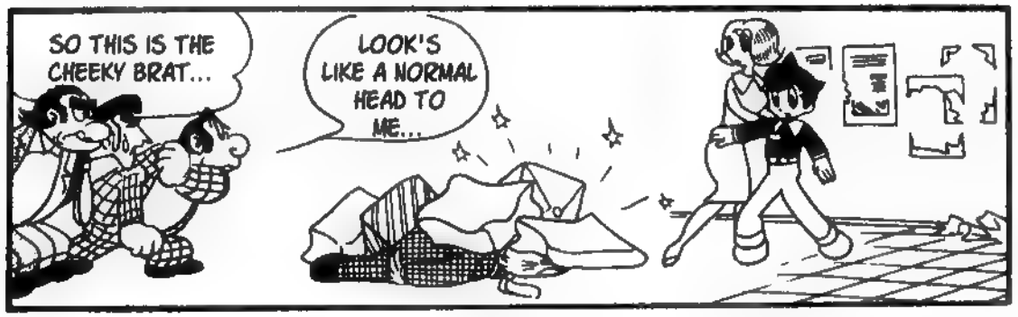
TWO OF THREE PEOPLE CAME OVER TO ASK IF HE WAS ALL RIGHT, BUT HE JUST SAID, *"UM...* IT'S NOTHING..."

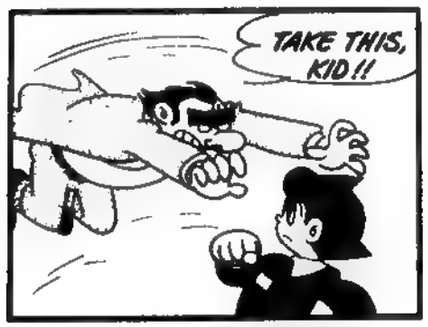

YO, BABY...
QUITE A HAUL, THERE!
I *LIKE* THE WAY YOU SHOP!
BE A GENTLE-MAN, SHORTY! *HELP* HER!
DON'T WORRY. MY YOUNGER BROTHER HERE'LL TAKE *GOOD* CARE OF YER STUFF...
HOW'S ABOUT YOU AND ME GOING BOWL-ING?
BETTER YET, WHY DON'T WE GO FOR A DRIVE IN A COOL CAR... I CAN GET HOLD OF A SPORTS CAR...
WE COULD GO TO A *HOT SPRING* AND HAVE A BLAST!
WOW
WHY, THAT'S A *GREAT* IDEA! HERE'S A *MILLION YEN.* THINK IT'S ENOUGH?

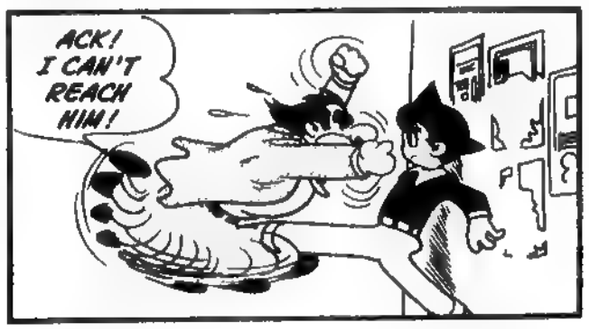



WHAT'S UP, BOSS?
HE'S A M-MON-STER!


YOU SAY HE'S GOT A DOLL HEAD?
YOU SURE THIS SPRING WEATHER'S NOT AFFECTING YOU, BOSS?


SO THIS IS THE CHEEKY BRAT...
LOOK'S LIKE A NORMAL HEAD TO ME...


TAKE THIS, KID!!


ACK! I CAN'T REACH HIM!


PWAK

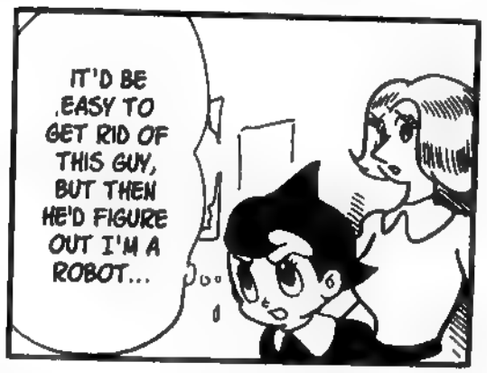

AIEE!


YOW-ZER...

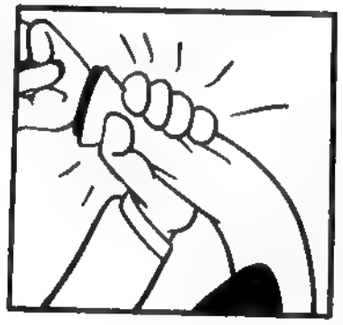

THAT KID PACKS REAL A PUNCH! YER SHNOZZLE'S UPSIDE-DOWN!


YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME, KID!!

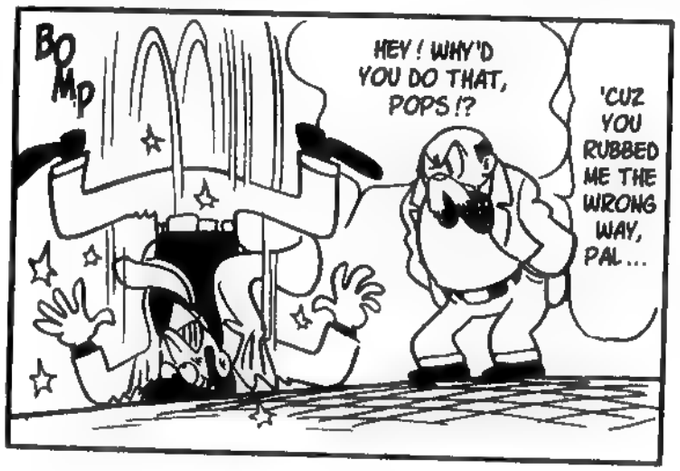

I RULE HERE, AND YOU'VE JUST HUMILIATED ME!


IT'D BE EASY TO GET RID OF THIS GUY, BUT THEN HE'D FIGURE OUT I'M A ROBOT...


I'LL TEACH YOU A LESSON...



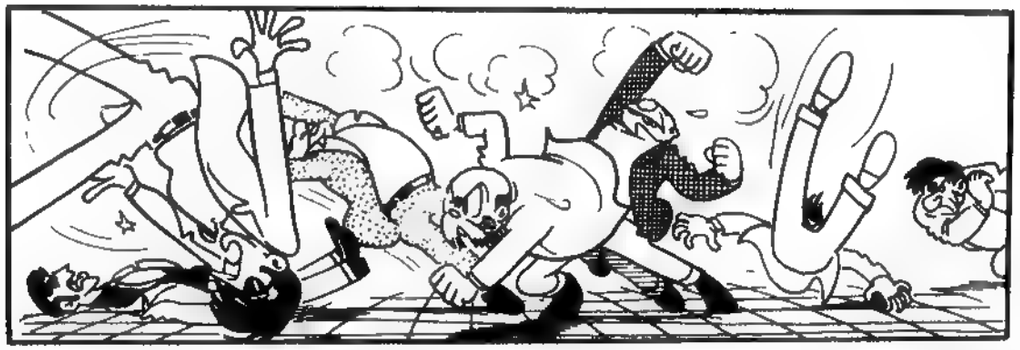



BOMP
HEY! WHY'D YOU DO THAT, POPS!?
'CUZ YOU RUBBED ME THE WRONG WAY, PAL...


WHAT THE--?!

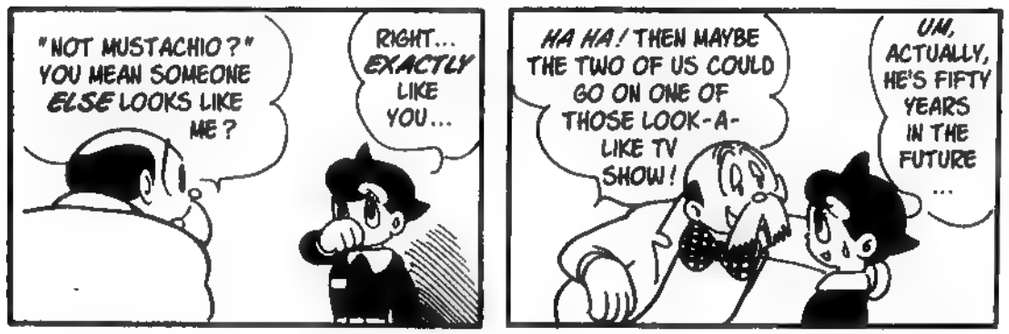

YOU KNOW THIS KID?
NOPE. JUST HAPPENED TO BE PASSING BY AND DIDN'T LIKE WHAT I SAW!


I'VE GOT A BIT OF A BAD REPU-TATION MYSELF.
I'M A PHYSICIAN... A DOCTOR TO YOU, PAL! SOME CALL ME, NOT "RED," BUT "WHITE-BEARD"!




OWWW...
YOU SHADY TYPES'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE, HANGING AROUND HERE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!
HERE, TAKE THESE BAND AIDS AND SCRAM !!


YOU TWO ALL RIGHT?
MR. MUSTA-CHIO !!
HA HA! THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN CALLED THAT!
YOU'RE NOT MUSTA-CHIO?


"NOT MUSTACHIO?" YOU MEAN SOMEONE ELSE LOOKS LIKE ME?
RIGHT... EXACTLY LIKE YOU...
HA HA! THEN MAYBE THE TWO OF US COULD GO ON ONE OF THOSE LOOK-A-LIKE TV SHOW!
UM, ACTUALLY, HE'S FIFTY YEARS IN THE FUTURE ...

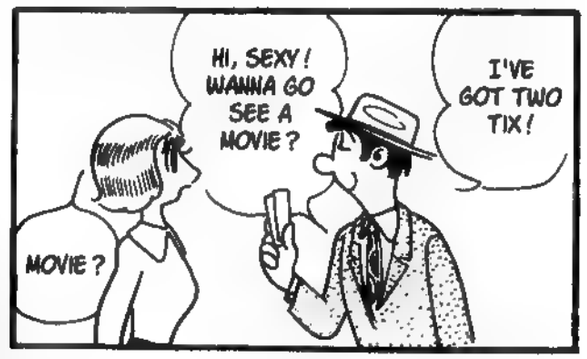

WHA...?
MAYBE MR. MUSTACHIO'S ONE OF THIS GUY'S DESCEND-ANTS...
HEH HEH... JUST JOKING...
JOKING? YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY BEEN READING WAY TOO MANY OF THOSE SCI-FI MANGA...


WHERE DO YOU LIVE, MISTER?
SURUGADAI, KANDA! I'M A THIRD-GENERATION TOKYO-ITE! I DIG SUSHI, BUT I LIKE OSAKA OKONOMIYAKI PANCAKES, TOO!
IF YOU'RE EVER SICK, COME BY MY "THRILL CLINIC"! HA HA!


GOSH... HE WALKS AND TALKS EXACTLY LIKE MR. MUS-TACHIO!
BUT WHY'D YOU LET THOSE PUNKS PICK YOU UP, SCARA P!


WELL...
THEY INVITED ME TO GO HAVE SOME FUN...
FUN?
THERE'S A LOT OF BAD PEOPLE ON EARTH, SCARA, AND YOU'LL GET IN BIG TROUBLE IF YOU ACCEPT ANY OLD INVITATION...


DON'T EVER ACCEPT ANY OFFERS LIKE THAT UNTIL YOU'RE MORE USED TO LIFE HERE, OKAY?
OKAY... OKAY...


MOVIE?
HI, SEXY! WANNA GO SEE A MOVIE?
I'VE GOT TWO TIX!


SCARA! WHAT'D I JUST TELL YOU!?


HERBAL MEDICINE
I WANT THESE...
NO, SCARA!
YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH!
LISTEN, YOU'RE NOT A CHILD...
...AND YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING YOU WANT!
BUT EVERY-THING'S SO INTEREST-ING ON EARTH!
THERE'S NO END TO THIS!
DON'T BUY ANYTHING UNLESS I TELL YOU, OKAY?
BUT YOUR HAIR IS A MESS. WE OUGHTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT....
ON EARTH, WOMEN HAVE TO LOOK GOOD...
BEAUTY
THEY'LL MAKE YOU LOOK GOOD, SCARA!
I BOUGHT THIS, ASTRO!
THE SALON'S HAIR DRYER?!
NOT BUYING ANYTHING'S BORING...
BUT YOU DO LOOK GREAT NOW!
LET'S GO HOME BY TRAIN. YOU CAN BUY A TICKET!
HERE, LOOK HOW MANY I GOT, ASTRO!!



THE BIRTH OF NEVA #2

WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS FOREVER...

PEOPLE'LL SUSPECT US IF WE JUST HANG AROUND ALL DAY AND GO OUT AT NIGHT...

SCARA... WE'VE GOTTA GO TO WORK. *BOTH OF US*...

NO!!

I *HATE* THE IDEA OF WORKING!

BACK HOME THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WAS TO HAVE *FUN!* IT'S WHAT I'M REALLY *GOOD* AT!

BUT THAT WAS BACK HOME ...

ON EARTH *EVERYBODY* HAS TO WORK...

YO, GUYS! HOW'S IT GOING?

?

I WANT TO BE A *BEGGAR* LIKE SHIN-CHAN!

OTHERWISE I DON'T WANT TO WORK!!

SCARA! BE REASON-ABLE!

BUT YESTERDAY WE GOT LOTS OF MONEY WITHOUT WORKING!

THAT'S BECAUSE I BURROWED INTO A *VOL-CANO* ...

...AND DUG UP THOSE *GEM-STONES!*

WELL, MAYBE WE COULD LIVE IN THE VOLCANO AND HAVE JEWELS EVERYDAY!

ARGH... YOU JUST DON'T *GET* IT...

KNOW ANY *EASY* PLACES FOR HER TO WORK, SHIN-CHAN?

HMM. TOKYO'S PRETTY TOUGH. EVEN THE GOVER-NOR'S HAVING A HARD TIME NOW...

?

GOSH, LET'S JUST OPEN THE STUFF WE BOUGHT YESTER-DAY...

DIAPERS? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THOSE?

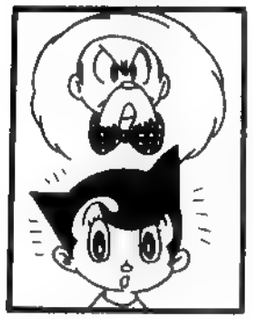
WELL, I THOUGHT THEY WERE CUTE...

YOU BOUGHT A WHOLE BOX OF PILLOWS?

WE CAN USE THEM FOR *PILLOW FIGHTS!*









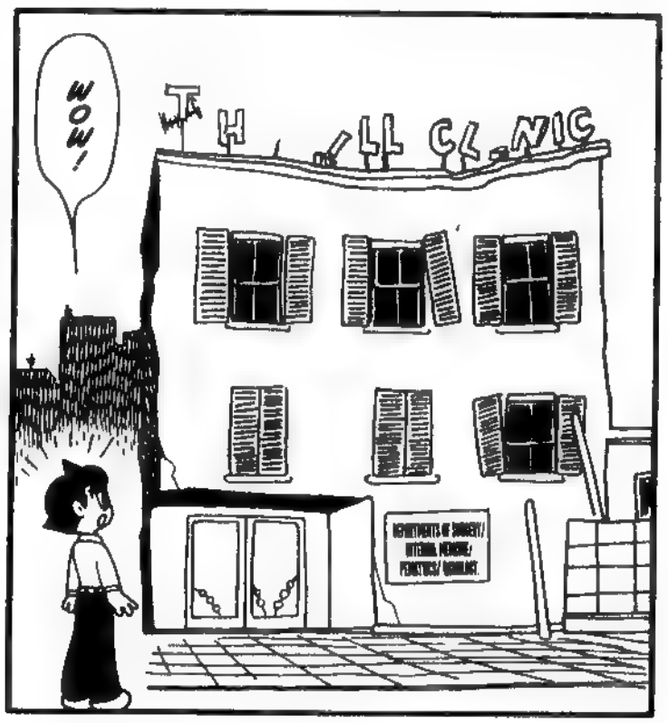


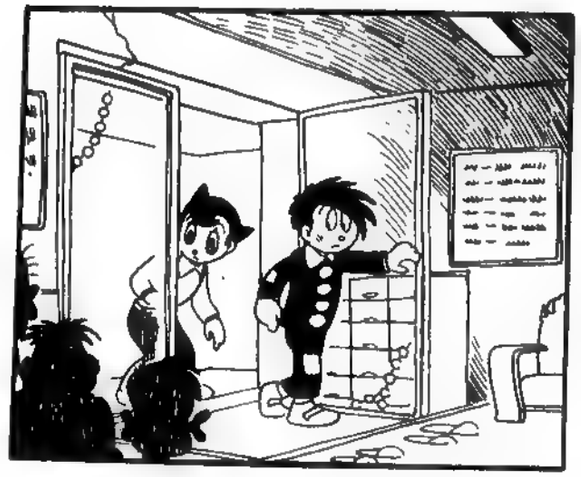








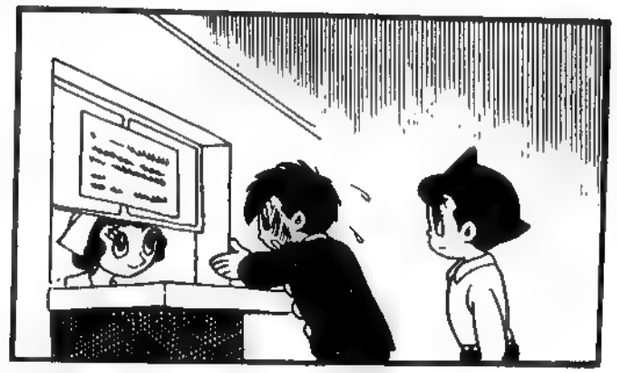




SHIN-CHAN AND ASTRO GINGERLY OPENED THE DOOR AND ENTERED A DARK WAITING ROOM. THE PATIENTS THERE WERE ALL SHABBILY DRESSED, AND THEY STARED AT THE BOYS.

"UM... WE'D LIKE TO MEET DR. WHITEBEARD," SHIN-CHAN SAID TO THE RECEPTION NURSE.

"THIS YOUR FIRST TIME HERE FOR A CHECKUP?" SHE ASKED.



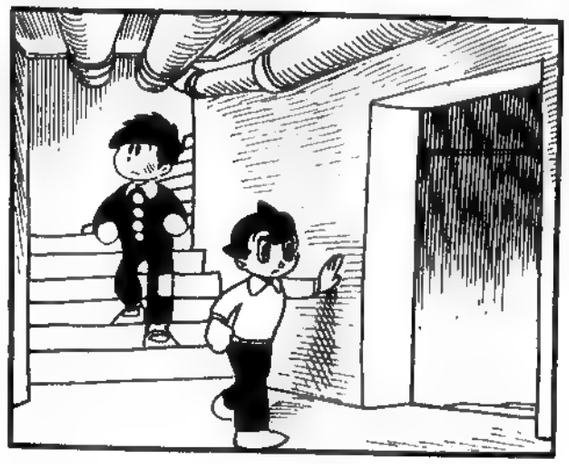


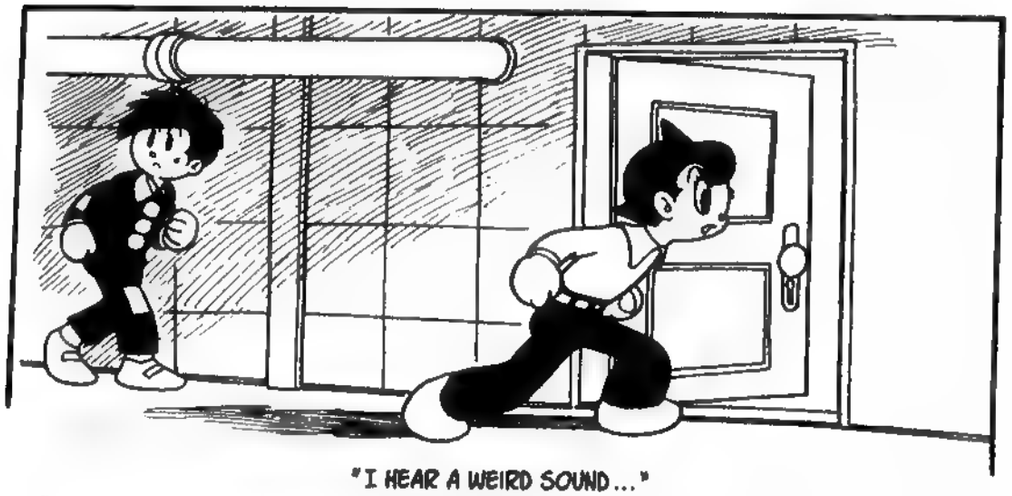
"UM, ACTUALLY, WE'RE NOT HERE FOR THAT. HE ASKED US TO STOP BY, AND WE NEED TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT SOMETHING..."

"OPEN THE DOOR THERE, THEN, AND GO DOWN ONE FLIGHT OF STAIRS TO THE BASEMENT, AND WAIT IN THE THIRD ROOM ON THE RIGHT..."

ASTRO AND SHIN-CHAN DID AS TOLD, BUT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS THERE WAS A STRANGE UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAY AND A HUMMING NOISE THAT SOUNDED AS IF IT WERE COMING FROM MACHINES...

"SOMETHING'S WEIRD ABOUT THIS PLACE," ASTRO SAID.





"I HEAR A WEIRD SOUND..."

"MAYBE IT'S FROM A MOTOR? NO, WAIT A SEC, MAYBE IT'S FROM A RADIO RECEIVER..."

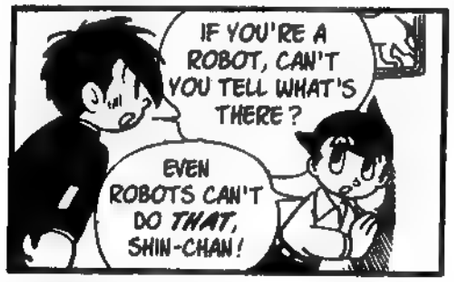
"MAYBE IT'S COMING FROM THIS ROOM HERE..."

"BUT THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A WAITING ROOM!"

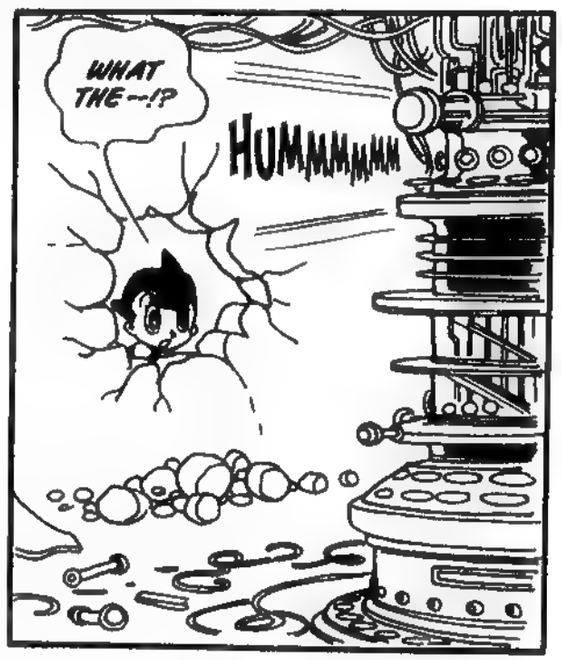
THE PAIR ENTERED THE ROOM WHERE THE NURSE HAD INSTRUCTED THEM TO WAIT, AND SAT DOWN ON A SOFA.

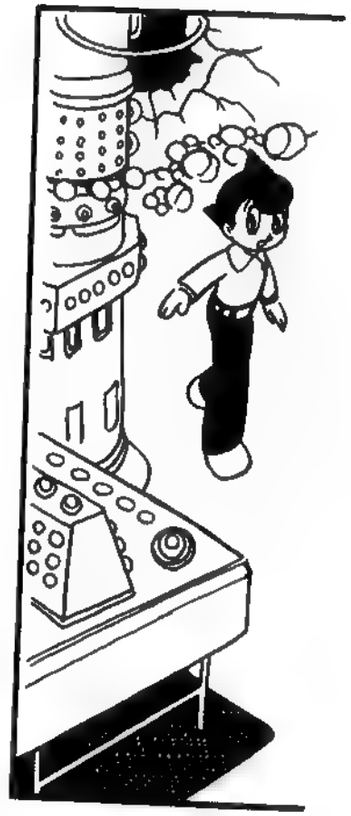
"YOU KNOW, ASTRO," SHIN-CHAN COMMENTED, "AFTER SEEING ALL THOSE POOR PEOPLE UPSTAIRS, I WONDER HOW THIS CLINIC CAN STAY IN BUSINESS...



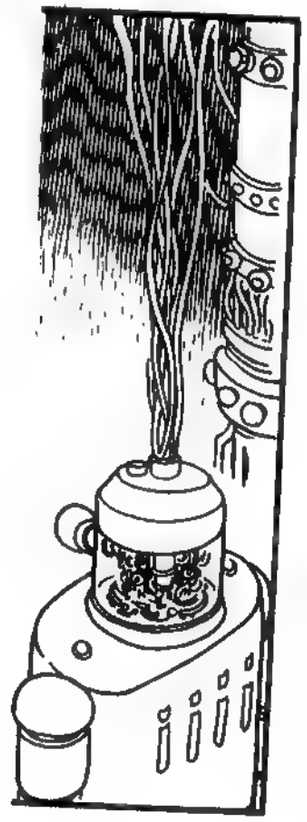


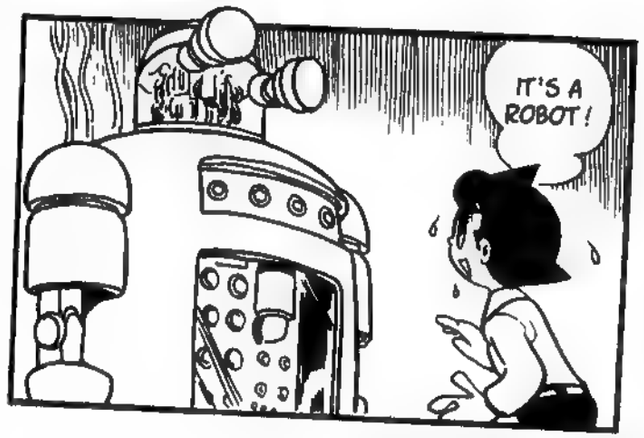






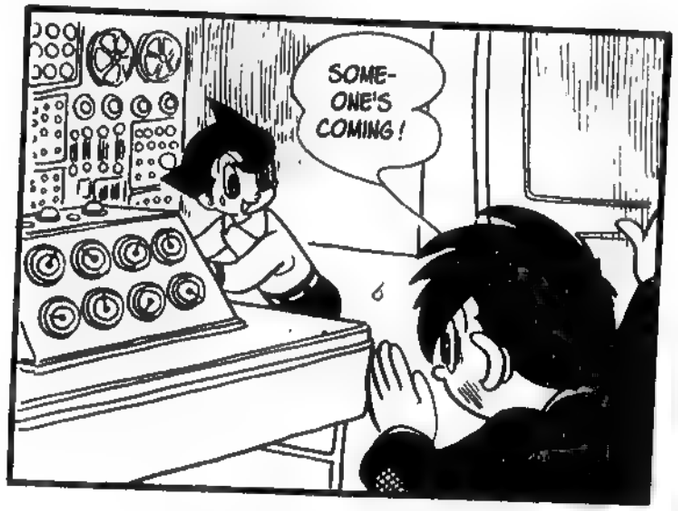
ALL SORTS OF MACHINES IN THE ROOM WERE CREATING THE HUMMING NOISE, RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM. THEN, HE REALIZED WITH SHOCK: "HEY! THERE'S A ***ROBOT*** HERE! IT'S A CRUDE, OLD FASHIONED MODEL, BUT IT'S A ***ROBOT!***"





"WOW! IT'S GREAT TO SEE A ROBOT, EVEN IF IT IS AN ANTIQUE! IT'S LIKE MEETING AN OLD FRIEND!" ASTRO PUT HIS HANDS ON THE ROBOT AND STROKED IT, AND TEARS WELLED IN HIS EYES.

WHILE ASTRO WAS LOOKING AT ANOTHER MACHINE AND THINKING IT MUST BE THE CONTROLLER, SHIN-CHAN CAME IN LOOKING UPSET AND SAID, "WATCH OUT, ASTRO! I HEAR FOOTSTEPS!"



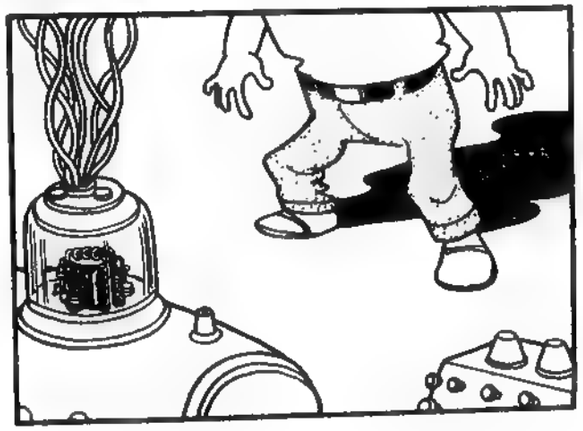


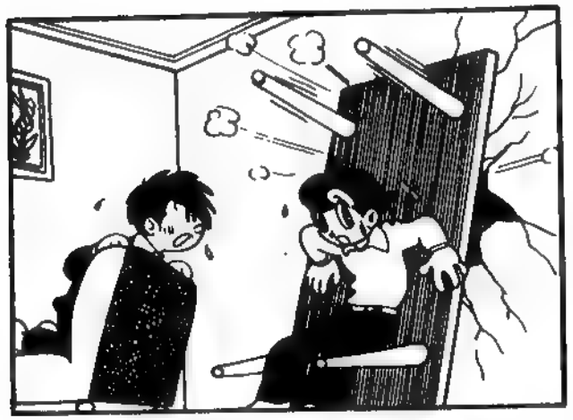
"WE BETTER GET BACK IN THE OTHER ROOM!" SO SAYING, THE PAIR JUMPED BACK THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE WALL.

"WHAT'LL WE DO ABOUT THE HOLE?" THEY WONDERED.

"WE COULD SEAL IT UP," SHIN-CHAN SAID, BUT ASTRO DIDN'T THINK THAT WOULD WORK.

ON SHIN-CHAN'S SUGGESTION ASTRO DECIDED TO BLOCK THE HOLE WITH THE WAITING ROOM'S COFFEE TABLE, PROPPING IT UP AGAINST THE WALL. BUT THEN HE HEARD A SCREAM FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL...





SOMEONE STARTED POUNDING ANGRILY ON THE TABLE FROM THE OTHER SIDE, YELLING, "WHO'S THERE?! WHO'S BEEN IN HERE? WHO'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS HOLE?! REMOVE THAT TABLE!!"

SHIN-CHAN, TERRIFIED, BEGGED ASTRO NOT TO LET GO OF THE TABLE. FROM THE OTHER SIDE THE A VOICE SCREAMED, "BURGLAR! BURGLAR!" AND IT ECHOED DOWN THE BASEMENT PASSAGEWAY.

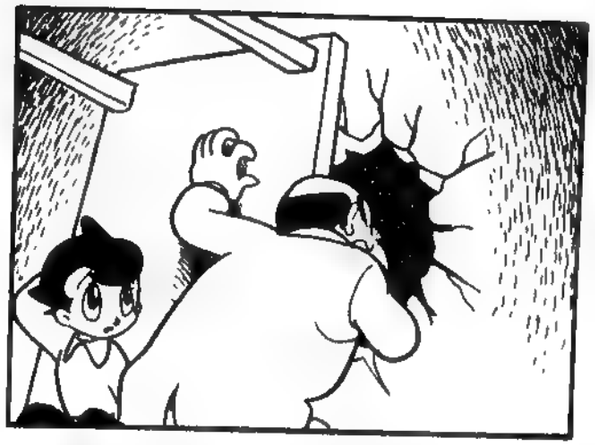
THEN DR. WHITEBEARD SUDDENLY ENTERED THE ROOM, YELLING "BURGLAR?! WHERE?! WHERE'D HE GO?"



"OUT OF THE WAY!" THE DOCTOR SAID. "WHO PUT THIS TABLE UP AGAINST THE WALL?! WHAT? WHO MADE THIS HOLE?!"

THEN, FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL, A VOICE SAID, "IT'S A BURGLAR, WHITEBEARD!"

TURNING TO ASTRO AND SHIN-CHAN, DR. WHITE BEARD SAID, "DON'T TELL ME ***YOU BOYS*** MADE THIS HOLE? EH?!"





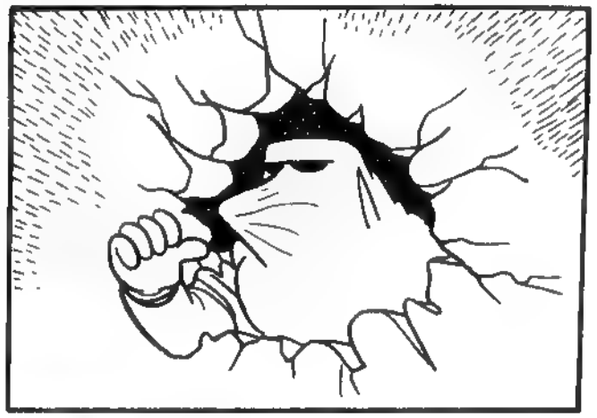
ASTRO WAS SO SURPRISED HE COULDN'T ANSWER, BUT THE DOCTOR PERSISTED, ASKING HOW HE COULD HAVE DONE IT, GIVEN THE WALL'S THICKNESS.

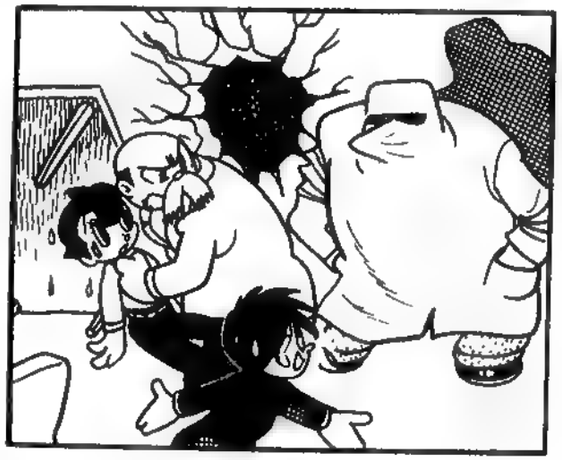
THEN, SUDDENLY, A MAN MASKED IN A WHITE SHEET POKED HIS FACE OUT FROM THE HOLE...

"LOOKS LIKE THE BURGLAR LEFT WITHOUT TAKING ANYTHING," THE MASKED MAN SAID.

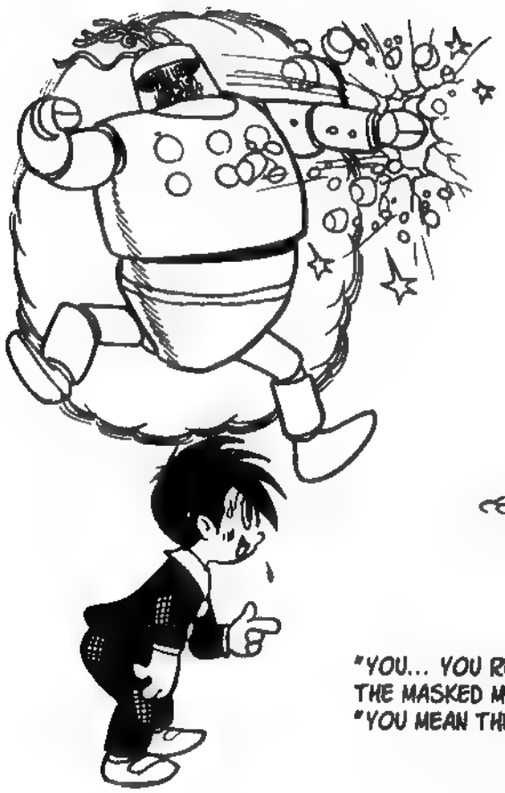
"BUT I DIDN'T SEE ANYONE IN THE HALLWAY, AND THESE TWO BOYS ARE THE ONLY ONES IN THIS ROOM," THE DOCTOR REPLIED.

STARING AT THE BOYS WITH A REPROVING LOOK, THE MASKED MAN ASKED, "BUT WHO ELSE COULD HAVE SMASHED THIS HOLE?"





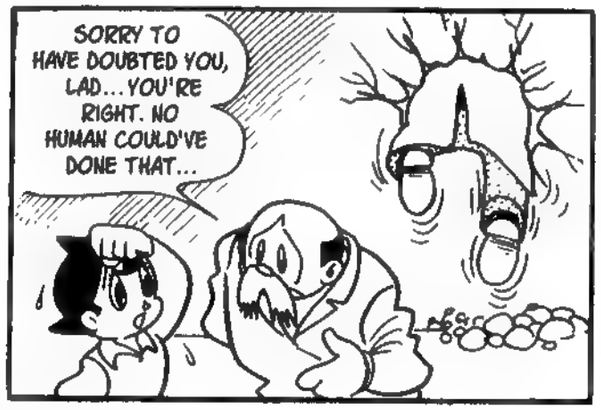
SHIN-CHAN SUDDENLY CAME FORWARD AND ANNOUNCED, "IT WAS THAT ***ROBOT*** IN THE NEXT ROOM! I ***SAW*** HIM!" HE WAS MAKING IT UP, OF COURSE, BUT THE MASKED MAN WAS SUDDENLY TAKEN ABACK.

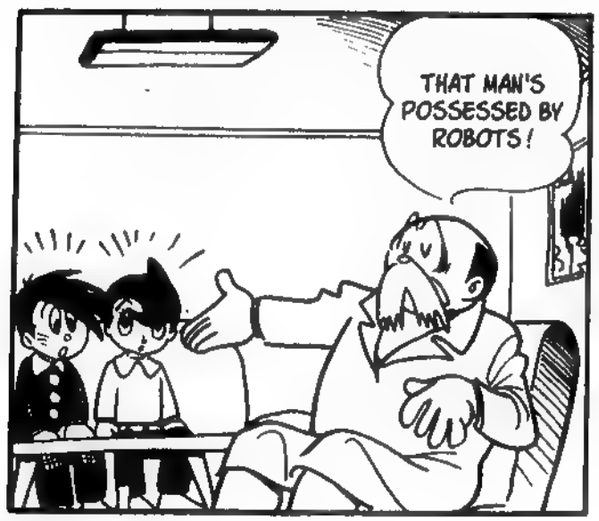




"YOU... YOU REALLY SAW THE ***ROBOT*** DO THAT?" THE MASKED MAN ASKED, SUDDENLY APPEARING HAPPY. "YOU MEAN THE ROBOT REALLY ***MOVED***?"

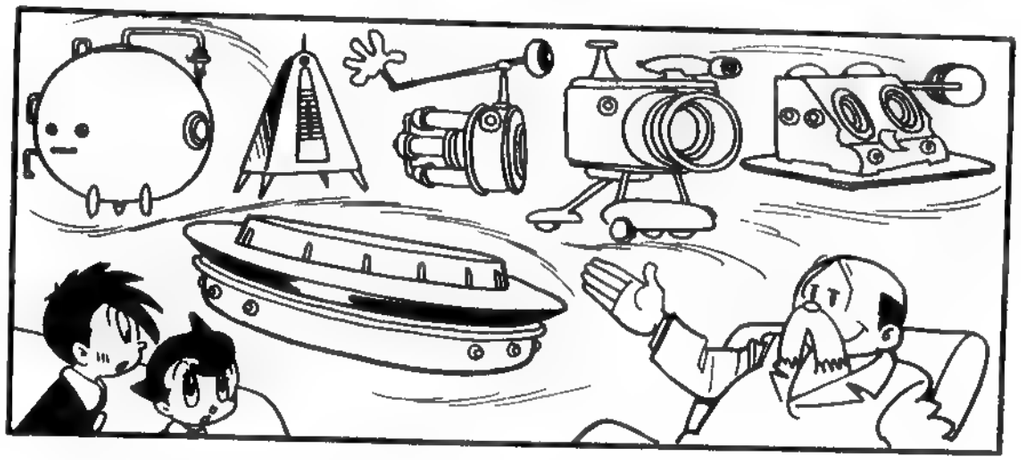
WITH A "HALLELUJAH!" HE RAISED BOTH HANDS OVER HIS HEAD AND SHOUTED, "***NEVA #1*** MOVED ON HIS OWN AND SMASHED THE WALL? HE'S A SUCCESS! MY ROBOT ***WORKS***!" AND THEN HE CLIMBED BACK THROUGH THE HOLE INTO THE OTHER ROOM.





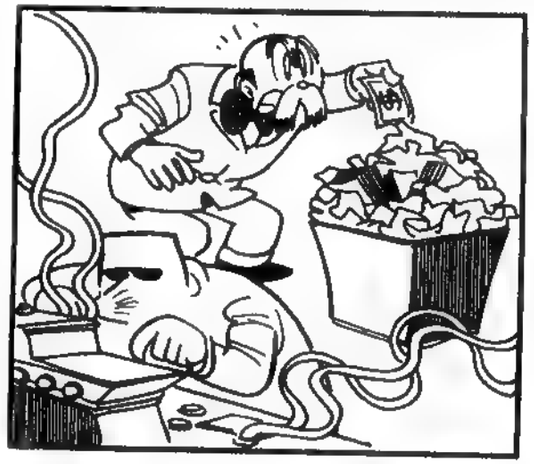
THE DOCTOR SIGHED AND APOLOGIZED TO THE BOYS, ESPECIALLY ASTRO. "HE'S AN INVENTOR, SEE? FOR YEARS HE'S BEEN TRYING TO BUILD A ROBOT CALLED ***NEVA #1***... HE'S PUT HIS BODY AND SOUL INTO IT..."

ASTRO AND SHIN-CHAN EXCHANGED PUZZLED LOOKS.

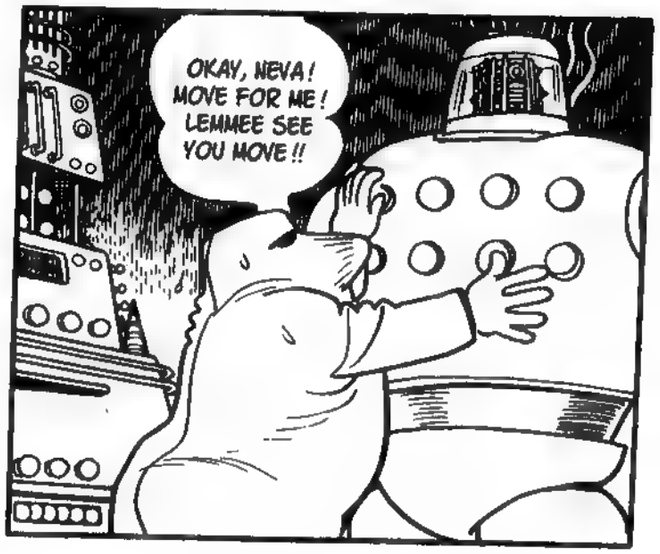


"HOW COME HE'S WEARING THAT WEIRD MASKED SMOCK?" THE BOYS ASKED.

"WELL," THE DOCTOR REPLIED WITH A SIGH, "IT'S APPARENTLY TO WARD OFF ***RADIATION***. HE'S USING ***ATOMIC ENERGY***, SEE, AND HE'S GOTTEN IN THE HABIT OF WEARING IT... YOU KNOW, I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE WHO'S INVENTED SO MANY THINGS. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT IT, OF COURSE, BUT HE'S PROBABLY UP THERE WITH THOMAS EDISON. ALMOST ALL HIS INVENTIONS ARE BOUGHT BY THE UNITED STATES OR EUROPEAN NATIONS, SO HE'S ACTUALLY BETTER KNOWN OVERSEAS. BUT THE MAN'S GOT NO SENSE OF MONEY, AND HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THE CASH THE AMERICANS KEEP SENDING HIM..."



"HE BUYS A FEW PARTS ONCE IN A WHILE, OF COURSE, BUT HE JUST LEAVES THE REST LYING AROUND. WHY, I'VE EVEN FISHED PERFECTLY GOOD DOLLAR BILLS OUT OF THE ***TRASH CAN***! I DON'T WANT HIS MONEY TO GO TO WASTE, SO WE BUILT THIS HOSPITAL WITH IT, AND I USE IT TO TREAT PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE ANY. THAT'S WHAT THIS PLACE IS ALL ABOUT, SEE?"



MOVE... *PLEASE* MOVE... SHOW ME WHAT YOU CAN DO, NEVA!

HE'S NOT BUDGING!

YOU MADE THE HOLE IN THE WALL, RIGHT? YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD...

...SO *PLEASE* MOVE FOR ME...

HE'S DYING TO SEE THE THING MOVE ON ITS OWN...

...BUT I GUESS BEING A GENIUS DOESN'T HELP HERE...

I DOUBT IF ANY-ONE'LL EVER MAKE...

...A ROBOT THAT REALLY WORKS LIKE A HUMAN...

NO! THEY WILL!!

WHOA! I KNOW YOU KIDS THINK SO, BUT IT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE...

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, DOCTOR?

THERE'LL BE ROBOTS MADE THAT ARE EVEN *MORE* ADVANCED THAN HUMANS!

PROFESSOR OCHANOMIZU !!

WHOA... I'M OCHANOMIZU ALL RIGHT, BUT I'M NO PRO-FESSOR YET...

GOSH, YOU LOOK SO *YOUNG!* WHOOPS! I FORGOT IT'S FIFTY YEARS AGO...

?

IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU!

oUCH!

OW! OW! OW!

YOU HIT ME IN MY WEAK POINT!

DON'T WORRY, MIS-TER! YOU'RE GONNA BE A PROFESSOR AND THEN THE HEAD OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE!

YOU SOME SORT OF *PROPHET*, BOY?

I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU, PROFESSOR...

BUT I'M *NOT* A PROFES-SOR!

MAYBE I COULD BE YOUR ASSISTANT?

I THINK IT'S TIME YOU TOLD US WHY YOU'RE HERE...

OH... *UM*... WE CAME TO ASK ABOUT WORK FOR MY SISTER...

BUT MAYBE YOU COULD HIRE ME, TOO! *PLEASE P!*

?

?



THE NEXT DAY ASTRO TOOK SCARA TO THE THRILL CLINIC, AND INTRODUCED HER TO DR. WHITEBEARD.

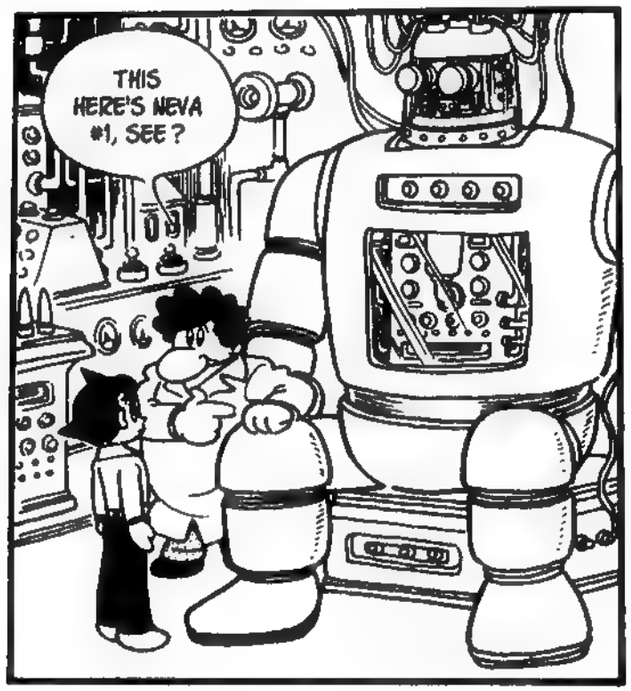
"SO YOU'RE THE ONE HE WAS TALKING ABOUT, EH?" THE DOCTOR COMMENTED. "AND, YOU WANT TO WORK AS A NURSE AT MY CLINIC?"

"ER, YES... AND I'D DO MY VERY BEST," SCARA REPLIED.

"GOOD. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE COURSES AT NURSING SCHOOL. YOU HAVE TO PASS AN EXAM IN ORDER TO WORK AS A NURSE..."

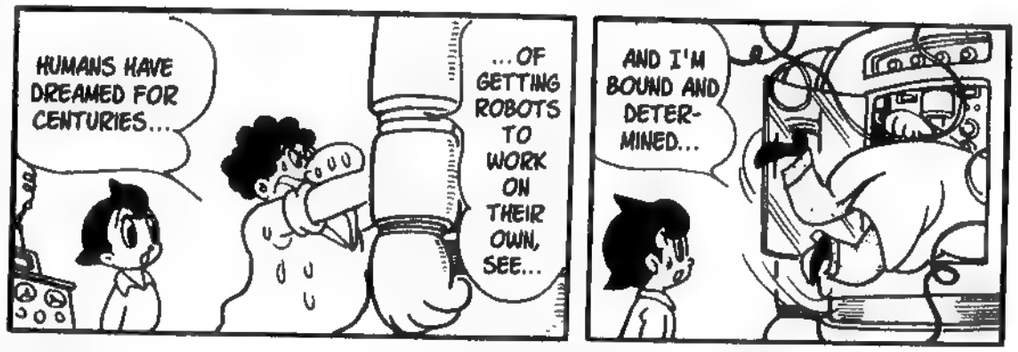
"I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL? THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN INTERESTING PLACE. I'LL GO ANYWHERE, TO SCHOOL, EVEN TO THE POLICE!"





"WELL," WHITEBEARD REPLIED, "NO NEED FOR YOU TO GO TO THE *POLICE*, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO STUDY HARD. OH, AND ASTRO... THAT WAS THE NAME WASN'T IT? YOU CAN START WORK AS OCHANOMIZU'S ASSISTANT FROM TODAY IF YOU WANT. FEEL FREE TO GO JOIN HIM IN HIS LAB DOWN IN THE BASEMENT."

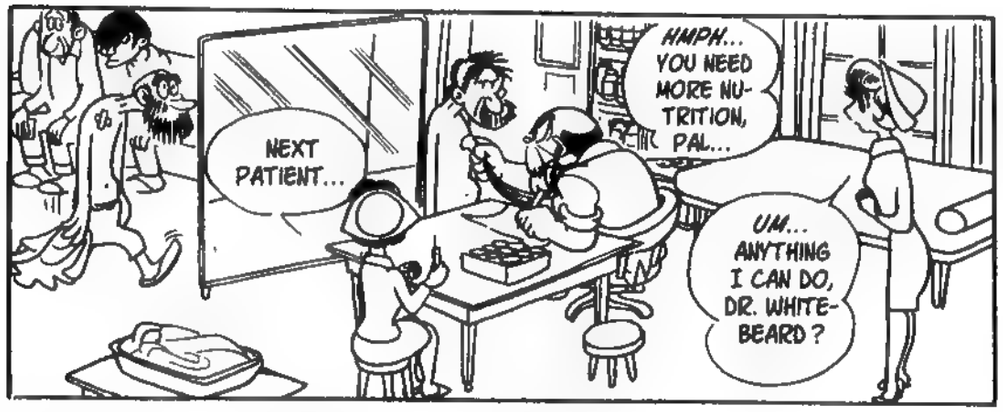
ASTRO TURNED TO SCARA. "THIS WORKED OUT GREAT, DIDN'T IT?" HE SAID. "I'LL SEE YOU LATER! LET'S BOTH DO OUR BEST!"









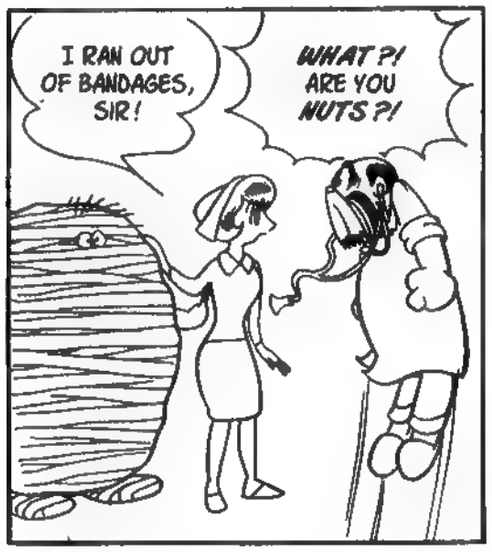

NEXT PATIENT...
HMPH... YOU NEED MORE NUTRITION, PAL...
UM... ANYTHING I CAN DO, DR. WHITEBEARD?


HERE, BANDAGE THIS GENTLEMAN...
I GOT A SPLINTER ...

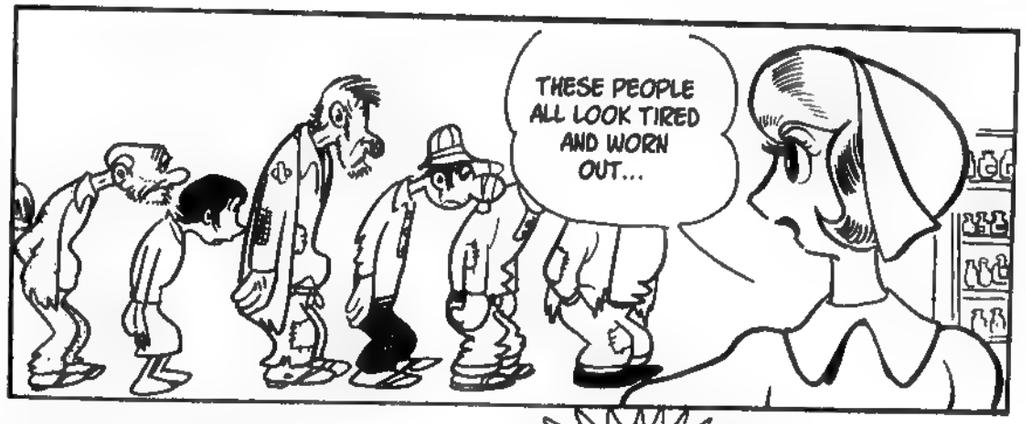

REMOVE YOUR CLOTHES, SIR...
FOR A SPLINTER?


I'VE GOT TO BANDAGE YOU...
MY WHOLE BODY?


HEY! LEMME OUT OF HERE!!


I RAN OUT OF BANDAGES, SIR!
WHAT?! ARE YOU NUTS?!


LISTEN!! I DID THAT SO HE COULDN'T GET SPLINTERS IN OTHER PLACES!!
OWWW!


THESE PEOPLE ALL LOOK TIRED AND WORN OUT...


YOU KNOW, THEY'LL NEVER LOOK ANY BETTER, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO...


LISTEN! I'M A DOCTOR! I CURE ILLNESS, NOT POVERTY!
WELL ON MY PLANET, PEOPLE LIKE--


OOPS!
I ALMOST BLEW IT!!


NO MORE NONSENSE OUT OF YOU! GIVE THIS FELLOW A SHOT!

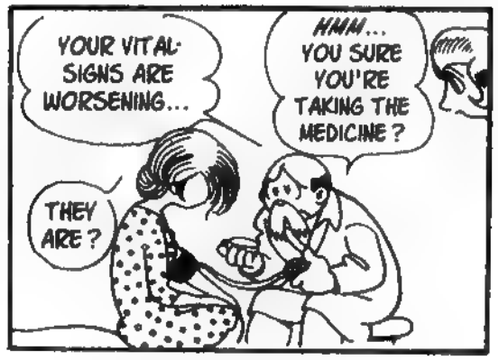

GOSH... YOU LOOK SO PALE...


INJECTING SUCH A TINY AMOUNT WON'T HELP AT ALL...

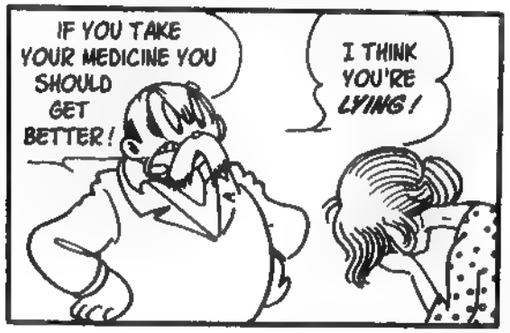

LOOK, DOCTOR! I MADE HIM BETTER!


I GAVE HIM A DRINK OF ALCOHOL USED FOR DISINFECTANT!

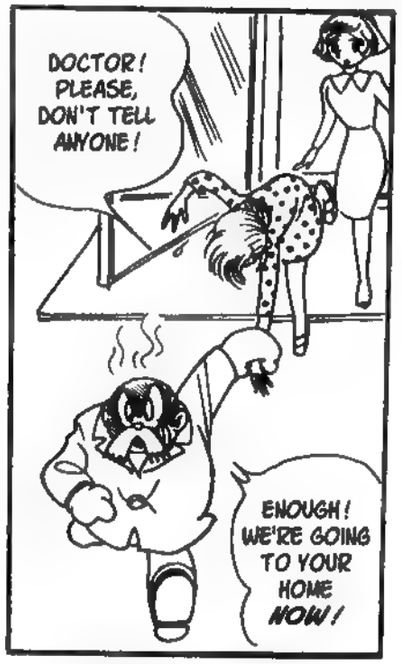

I'VE COME BACK AGAIN, DOCTOR...
'NOT FEELING ANY BETTER TODAY, MA'AM?


YOUR VITAL SIGNS ARE WORSENING...
HMM... YOU SURE YOU'RE TAKING THE MEDICINE?
THEY ARE?


YOU SURE YOU'RE TAKING IT?
REALLY, REALLY SURE?
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT!


IF YOU TAKE YOUR MEDICINE YOU SHOULD GET BETTER!
I THINK YOU'RE LYING!

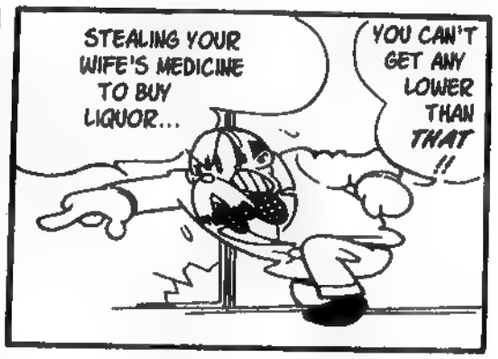

ACTUALLY, MY HUSBAND STEALS MY MEDICINE AND SELLS IT TO BUY LIQUOR TO DRINK....
HE WHAT?!!


DOCTOR! PLEASE, DON'T TELL ANYONE!
ENOUGH! WE'RE GOING TO YOUR HOME NOW!

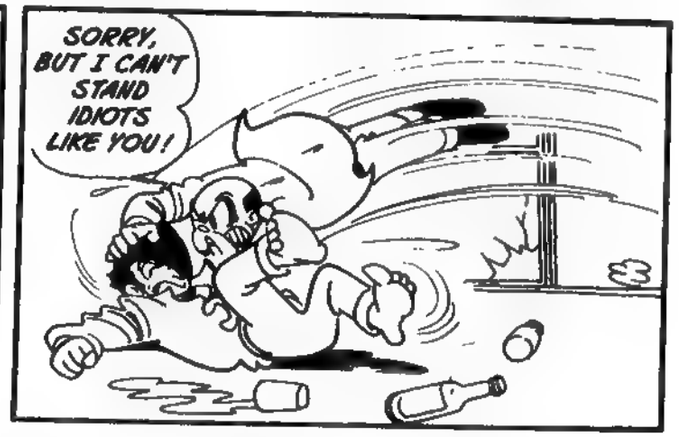

YOU ARE MARRIED TO A MONSTER, MA'AM!

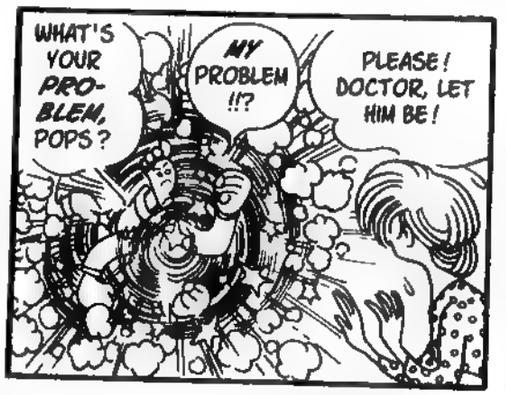

WHERE ARE YOU, YOU DRUNKEN SOT?!
SLAM

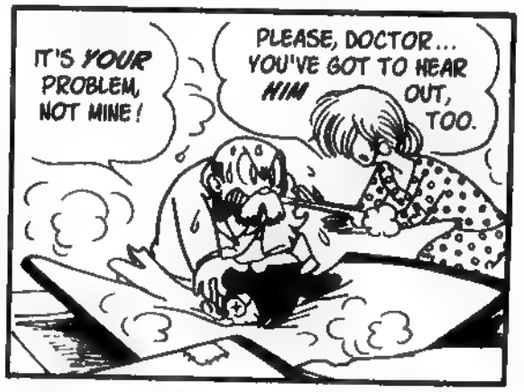

WELL, IF IT ISN'T DR. WHITEBEARD ...!
WHERE'D YOU GET THE MONEY TO BUY THAT SAKE, YOU SPONGE?!


STEALING YOUR WIFE'S MEDICINE TO BUY LIQUOR...
YOU CAN'T GET ANY LOWER THAN THAT!!

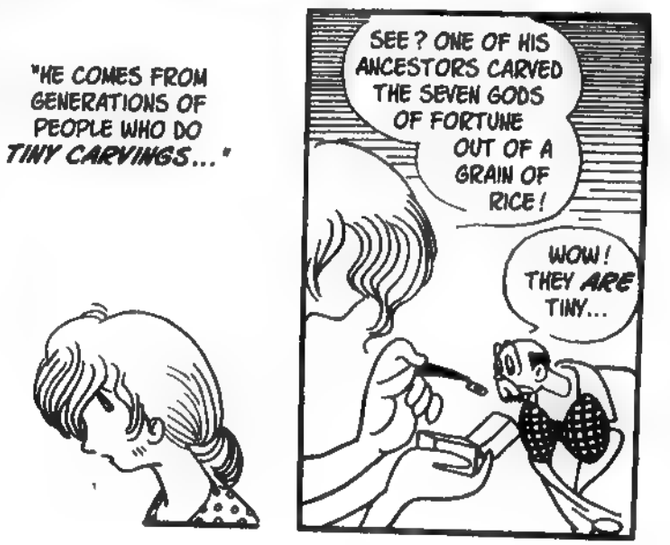

WHADDA YOU KNOW, DOCTOR? LEAVE ME ALONE!


SORRY, BUT I CAN'T STAND IDIOTS LIKE YOU!


WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, POPS?
MY PROBLEM!!?
PLEASE! DOCTOR, LET HIM BE!


IT'S YOUR PROBLEM, NOT MINE!
PLEASE, DOCTOR... YOU'VE GOT TO HEAR HIM OUT, TOO.


LISTEN, LADY... I DON'T NEED TO HEAR ANY EXCUSES FROM THIS MONSTER!
BUT THERE'S A REASON HE'S LIKE THIS...


"HE COMES FROM GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO DO TINY CARVINGS..."
SEE? ONE OF HIS ANCESTORS CARVED THE SEVEN GODS OF FORTUNE OUT OF A GRAIN OF RICE!
WOW! THEY ARE TINY...

"MY HUSBAND PRIDED HIMSELF ON BEING ONE OF THE TOP MINATURE CARVERS IN ALL JAPAN."

1 MILLIMETER-DIAMETER BELL

100 FLEAS CARVED FROM ERASER SHAVINGS

"BUT ONE DAY A MAN CAME OUT WITH A PRECISION AUTO-CARVING MACHINE."

"IT COULD CARVE ANYTHING, RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES."

HMPH. NO MACHINE'S GONNA OUT-CARVE *ME!*

I COME FROM A LONG LINE OF SKILLED CRAFTSMEN! I'M THE BEST CARVER IN ALL JAPAN!

"SO THERE WAS A CONTEST HELD BETWEEN MY HUSBAND AND THE NEW MACHINE..."

AND THE MACHINE WINS!

"WHOEVER CARVED THE SMALLEST THING THE FASTEST WOULD WIN..."

B... BUT...

THE MACHINE'S CARVING IS THE BEST!

I *HATE* TECHNOLOGY! I LOST TO A *MACHINE!!*

WHO NEEDS FINGERS?!

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*, DEAR?! *STOP!!*

I LOST TO A MACHINE! I'M *FINISHED!!*

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, DEAR? IT'S NOT OVER!

MARK MY WORDS! SCIENCE 'N TECHNOLOGY ARE GONNA TAKE AWAY SKILLS LIKE MINE... *ALL* WORK!!

"PEOPLE TALK ABOUT AUTOMATION, RIGHT? WHERE MACHINES MAKE THINGS AUTOMATICALLY..."

"WELL, SOMEDAY THEY'LL MAKE ROBOTS, AND THEY'LL MAKE *ALL* CRAFTSMEN LIKE ME--*ALL* OUR IDEAS AND SKILLS-- *WORTHLESS!*"

...AND SURE ENOUGH, DOCTOR, IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS RIGHT....

HE'S BEEN OUT OF WORK AND DRINKING EVER SINCE THEN, AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE SO POOR NOW...

ACK...

I HATE THE PEOPLE WHO INVENT THESE NEW-FANGLED MACHINES...

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!

I'VE GOTTA TELL OCHANOMIZU ABOUT THIS!

...I BET HE DOESN'T REALIZE WHAT'S GOING ON!

HE PROB'LY THINKS HE'S CONTRIBUTING TO HUMAN HAPPINESS...

WHAT A *JOKE!!*

OUR LIVES ARE BEING *RUINED,* DOCTOR!

I JUST DON'T GET IT...

"AS SCIENCE PROGRESSES, IF ROBOTS ARE USED WIDELY, HOW ARE THEY GOING TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY?"

HERE WE FINALLY GO, WITH *NEVA #2!*

AS LONG AS HIS BRAIN CIRCUITS ARE OK, THIS TIME HE OUGHTA BE ABLE TO MOVE ON HIS OWN...

AREN'T YOU GONNA PUT A *HEAD* ON HIM?

CAN'T YOU SEE? ALL THE MACHINES IN THIS ROOM ACT AS HIS HEAD!

HIS ELECTRONIC BRAIN'S *TOO BIG* TO FIT IN HIS HEAD!

SO WHY DON'T YOU MAKE ONE *SMALLER?*

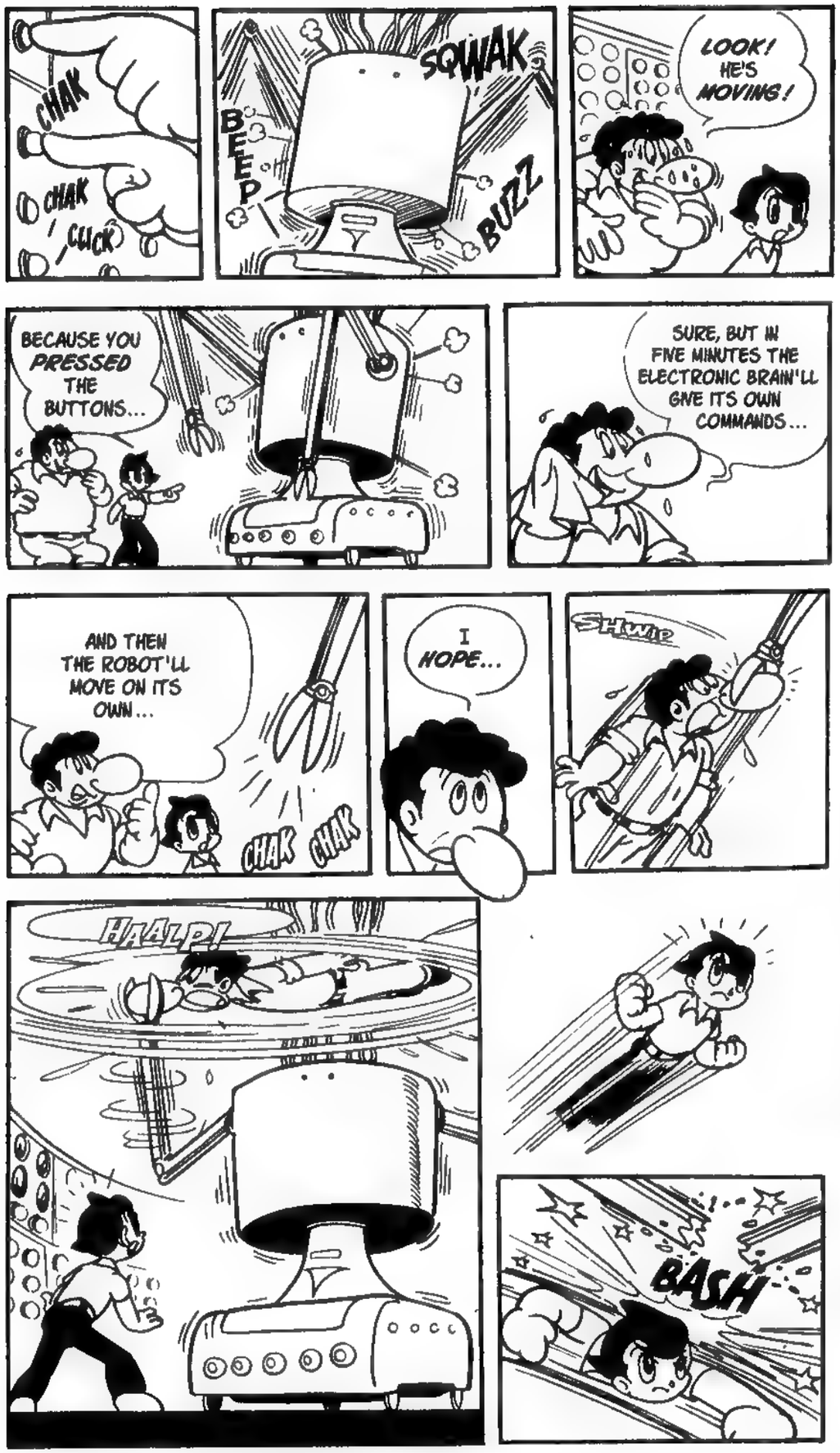
'CUZ WITH CURRENT SCIENCE WE *CAN'T!*

BUT WITH MY BODY...

OOPS! BETTER WATCH WHAT I SAY...

HERE WE GO... LET'S HOPE NEVA MOVES ON HIS OWN!

SO WAK


CHAK
CHAK
CLICK
BEEP
SQWAK
BUZZ
LOOK! HE'S MOVING!
BECAUSE YOU PRESSED THE BUTTONS...
SURE, BUT IN FIVE MINUTES THE ELECTRONIC BRAIN'LL GIVE ITS OWN COMMANDS...
AND THEN THE ROBOT'LL MOVE ON ITS OWN...
CHAK CHAK
I HOPE...
SHWIP
HAALP!
BASH


KA BOMP
?
?
WHAT'D YOU HIT HIM FOR, ASTRO?
UH OH...
YOU SMASHED HIS ARM WITH YOUR BARE HANDS?
LEMME SEE THOSE HANDS...
HEY! I DON'T GET IT! LEMME SEE!
NO, I CAN'T!
DON'T TOUCH ME!!
NOBODY COULD DO THAT WITH THEIR BARE HANDS!
GO AWAY!
IF HE CHECKS ME CLOSELY, IT'S OVER!
WAIT!
GOT-CHA!
WHAT THE --?!

Y... YOU'RE ARMS ARE...

...ARTIFICIAL PROSTHESES, AREN'T THEY?

I'M SORRY, ASTRO... I DIDN'T KNOW...

I 'SPOSE IF YOU HIT NEVA WITH THOSE, HIS ARM *WOULD* BREAK...

WHEW...

BEEP SQUAWK BUZZ

BEEP SQUAWK BUZZ BEEP

NEVA'S MAKING SOUNDS!

BEEP ERP

LOOK! HE MOVED THE *OTHER* ARM WITHOUT BEING COMMANDED!

DA... RK.... DA... RK....

HE'S *TALKING!*

DA... RK, DA... RK...

NEVA! DID YOU REALLY *SPEAK?!*

CAN YOU SPEAK ON YOUR OWN?

YAY YAY BANZAI HA HAH!

I MADE A *REAL ROBOT!!* I MADE THE WORLD'S FIRST *INTELLIGENT ROBOT!!*

HA HA HA HA!

WH... WHERE... AM... I...

LOOK RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!

CAN YOU SEE ME, NEVA?

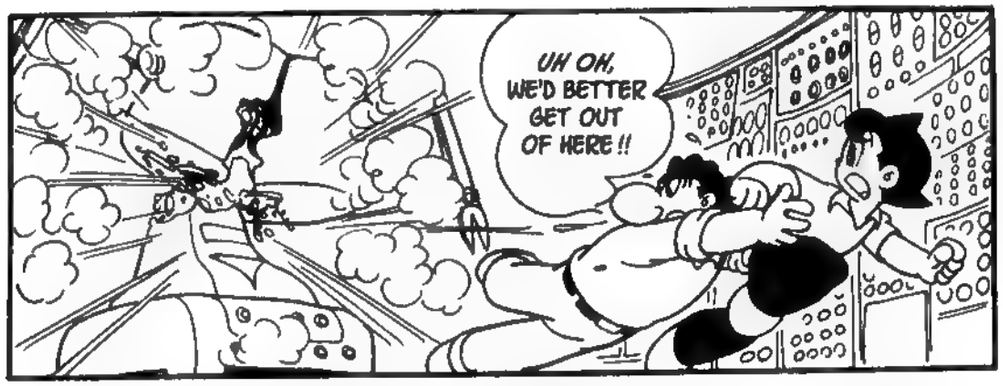
IT... IS... DARK...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, NEVA?

WHY CAN'T YOU SEE ME? IT'S NOT DARK IN HERE!

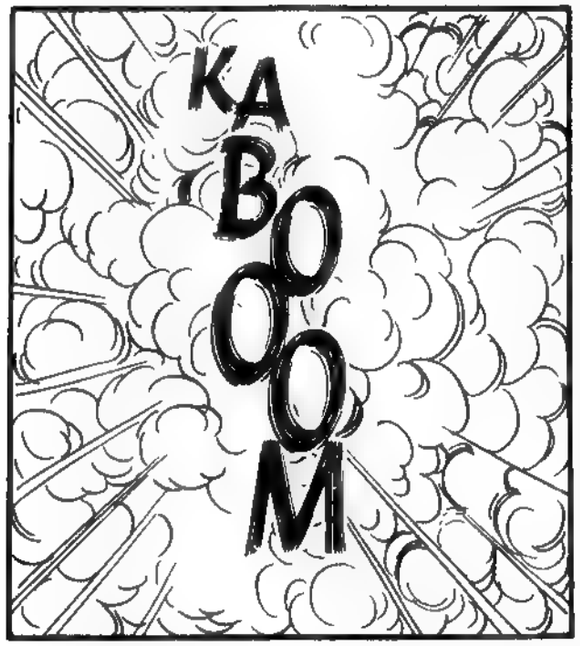
BOOM

BAM

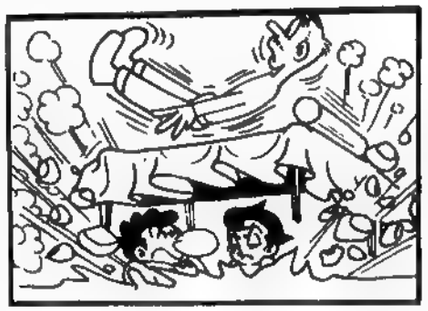

UH OH, WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!!


BAM
FSSSSSH


CLOSE THE DOOR!

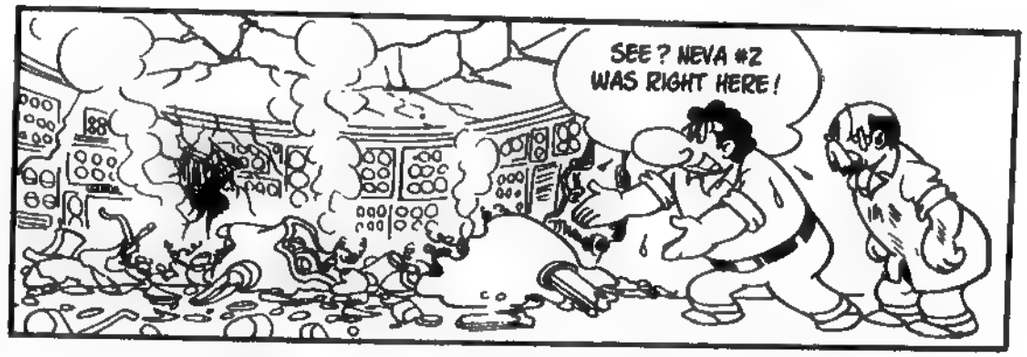

KA
BOOOM






HALP! DOCTOR! PEOPLE'VE COME THROUGH THE FLOOR!
OWWW!

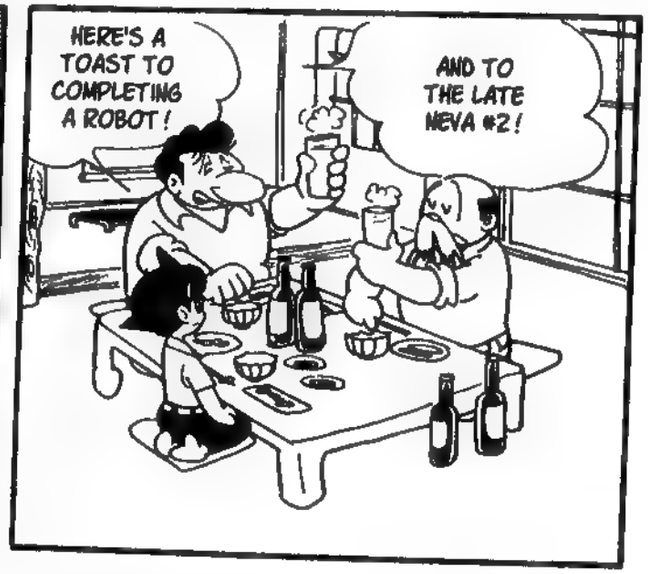

LOOK, DOCTOR!
OCHANO-MIZU, WHAT'S GOING ON?
GUESS WHAT?! MY ROBOT FINALLY WORKED !!!

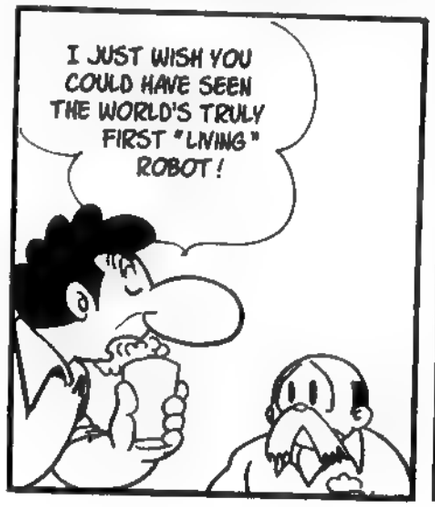

SEE? NEVA #2 WAS RIGHT HERE!

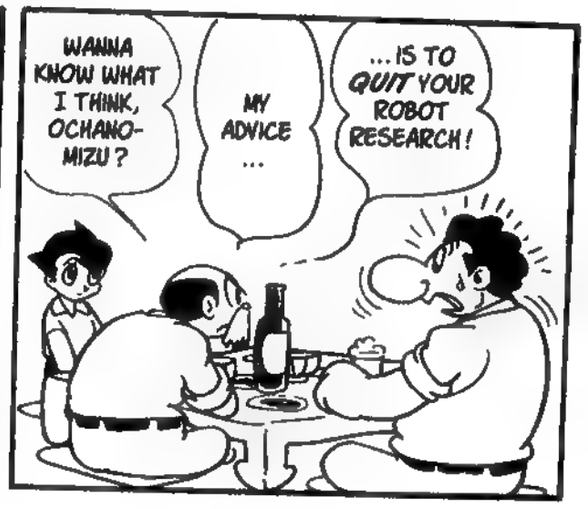

NEVA #2 MOVED A HAND, SAID "DARK... DARK..." AND THEN BLEW UP...


I WANTED TO SAVE HIM, BUT THERE WASN'T TIME!
DO YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS?!


HAMAKIMEN RESTAURANT


HERE'S A TOAST TO COMPLETING A ROBOT!
AND TO THE LATE NEVA #2!


I JUST WISH YOU COULD HAVE SEEN THE WORLD'S TRULY FIRST "LIVING" ROBOT!


WANNA KNOW WHAT I THINK, OCHANO-MIZU?
MY ADVICE ...
...IS TO QUIT YOUR ROBOT RESEARCH!

WHY? WHAT'VE YOU GOT AGAINST IT?

LISTEN, I KNOW YOU'VE DEDICATED YOUR LIFE TO ROBOTS, BUT...

I HAVE! AND SOMEDAY I'LL BUILD THE PERFECT ROBOT!

BEFORE I DIE, I WANT TO CREATE A TRUE ROBOT CIVILIZATION!

I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL... MAYBE YOU'LL EVEN ABLE TO...

BUT THINK ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY...

COMPUTERS, ELECTRONICS, AUTOMATION...

THAT'S ALL ANYONE EVER TALKS ABOUT...

IT'S ALREADY HARD FOR PEOPLE TO FIND WORK...

♪CHOMP CHOMP♪ ♪SLURP CHOMP♪

MAKE ROBOTS IN THE FUTURE AND PEOPLE WON'T GET ALONG WITH 'EM!

OH, YES THEY WILL!

OH, NO THEY WON'T!

GULP

SO YOU'D BETTER KNOCK OFF THE ROBOT RESEARCH!

LEGGO MY NOSE!!

LEGGO MY MUSTACHE!

HI, SCARA...

YOU'RE HOME SO LATE...

THEY TREATED ME TO A BIG DINNER...

'COURSE, I DON'T REALLY EAT FOOD...

BUT, YOU STORED A LOT IN YOU...

THEY KEPT SAYING GROWING BOYS HAVE TO EAT!

BUT WHY'RE YOU SO LATE?

DR. WHITE-BEARD AND OCHANOMIZU HAD A BIG ARGUMENT.

I CAN'T TELL IF THOSE TWO LIKE OR HATE EACH OTHER...

WHAT'D THEY ARGUE ABOUT?

...WHETHER ROBOTS WOULD BE USEFUL FOR PEOPLE OR NOT...

"SURE! WE HAVE SLAVE ROBOTS DO EVERYTHING, SO WE CAN HAVE FUN ALL THE TIME!"

OF COURSE THEY'RE USE-FUL!

THEY SURE ARE ON MY PLANET!

REALLY?

DID YOU SAY *SLAVES* ?!

OF COURSE. SLAVE ROBOTS ...

SLAVE ROBOTS ?!

DID I SAY SOME-THING WRONG ?

ROBOTS AREN'T SLAVES!!

BUT THEY ARE ON *MY* PLANET...

SO YOU THINK *I'M* A SLAVE ?

WHY, SURE, BUT YOU'RE LIKE MY LITTLE BROTHER, TOO, SO YOU'RE SPECIAL...

YOU THINK I'M A SLAVE...

SEE YOU LATER!

I'M NOT A SLAVE!!

I CAN'T LIVE WITH YOU, SCARA!

GOOD BYE!

GOSH...

I WONDER WHAT'S EATING HIM ?

I'M SURE HE'LL BE BACK SOON, THOUGH ...

I *HATE* SCARA!!

I REALLY...

...*REALLY* DO!

SNIF SOB

SHE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE. I CAN TELL WHITEBEARD HATES ROBOTS, TOO...

I'LL NEVER LIVE WITH ANYONE WHO THINKS ROBOTS ARE SLAVES!

I KNOW... I'LL GO VISIT *SHIN-CHAN*...

HE MUST KNOW SOME PLACE I CAN LIVE...

WE BRING YOU A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT. THE NATION OF PEAKOK HAS SUCCEEDED IN AN H-BOMB TEST. THIS BRINGS THE NUMBER OF NATIONS POSSESSING H-BOMBS TO FIVE...

WHA ?!

FURTHERMORE, ACCORDING TO THE VOICE OF PEAKOK, THE COUNTRY HAS SUCCEEDED IN DEVELOPING A *ROBOT DELIVERY SYSTEM* FOR ITS BOMB.



BARO, THE ROBOT

LESSEE... *PEAKOK* WAS IN THIS DIRECTION...

IF THEY HAVE A ROBOT, MAYBE IT'S GOT A MIND LIKE ME AND WE CAN COMMUNICATE!

FINALLY, AFTER ALL THAT OCEAN, LAND... WITH LIGHTS! MUST BE PEAKOK!

♫ SWALLOWS SWIRL IN THE EVENING SKY TRA LA, TRA LA! ♫

WHAT THE--?! A VISITOR FROM OUTER SPACE?!

UH OH...

WHAT'S THIS ?!

I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A *STATUE* THERE...

THAT WAS CLOSE! HE THINKS HE'S SEEING THINGS!

SOMEBODY MUST KNOW ABOUT THE ROBOT...

NO USE ASKING HERE, I S'POSE...

TRAVEL AGENCY

I KNOW! A *NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER!*

'SCUSE ME, SIR...

WHY, YOU'RE ALMOST NAKED, SON! YOU BEEN ROBBED?

YOU'RE A REPORTER, RIGHT, MISTER? YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT *ROBOTS*?

ROBOTS?

WHAT *ABOUT* ROBOTS?

YOU KNOW WHERE THEY'RE MAKING A *MILITARY ROBOT*?

A *WHAT*?

YOU MEAN THE *MISSILE ROBOT*? TOMORROW MORNING...

...IT'S, ER...

...IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE XXXX AT XXX HOURS AT XXXX.

XXXX WILL XXXX AT XXXXX, SO IT'S PROBABLY AT XXXX.

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE "X"s, MISTER?

JUST FILL IN THE BLANKS!

LET'S SEE YOUR I.D., BOY...

UM, I DON'T HAVE ONE...

DON'T HAVE ONE? ALL CITIZENS HAVE ONE!!

WE HEARD WHAT YOU ASKED! I BET YOU'RE A SPY!!

NO SPY HERE!!

TWEEEET

SPECIAL ALERT! NEARLY NAKED BOY...

...WITH SPIKED HAIR...

... MAY BE A SPY !!

IT'S PRESIDENT BUNDELL...

GO AHEAD, THEN...

ALL HAIL PRESIDENT BUNDELL!

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE PROFESSOR CARPON, WHO DEVELOPED OUR ROBOT DELIVERY SYSTEM!

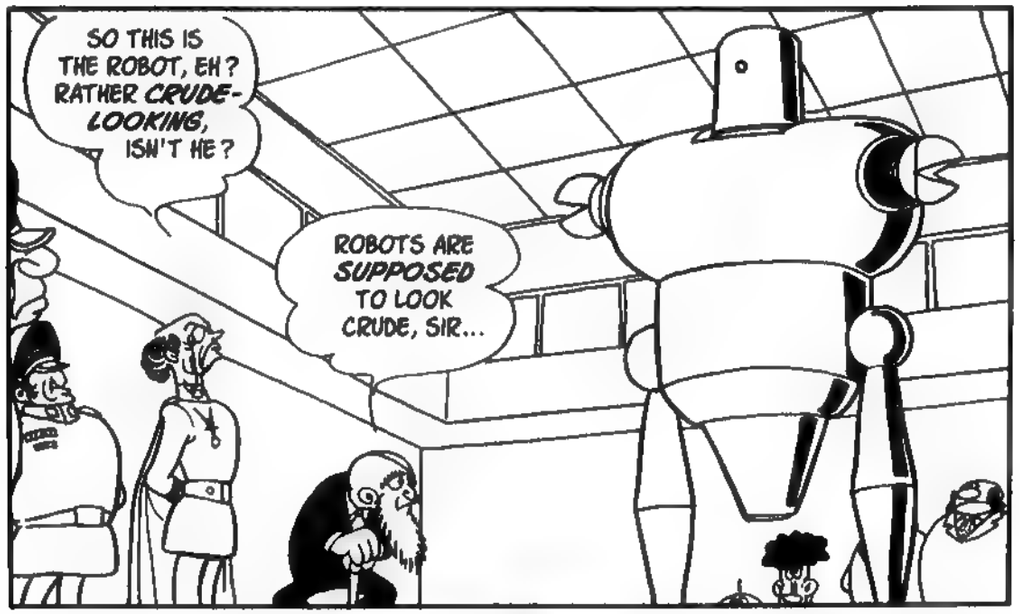
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESS, PROFESSOR!

YOU'RE TESTING IT TOMORROW, CORRECT?

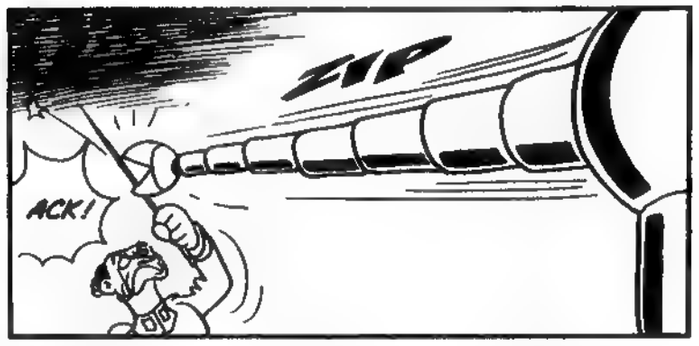
YES, SIR...

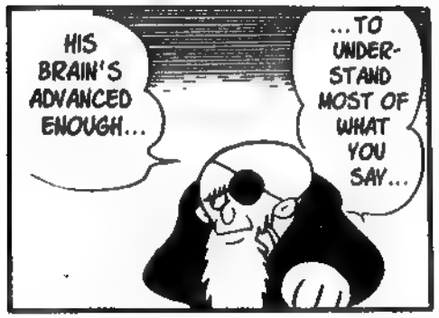
I'D LOVE TO SEE THIS ROBOT OF YOURS...

THIS WAY, EXCELLENCY...


SO THIS IS THE ROBOT, EH? RATHER CRUDE-LOOKING, ISN'T HE?
ROBOTS ARE SUPPOSED TO LOOK CRUDE, SIR...

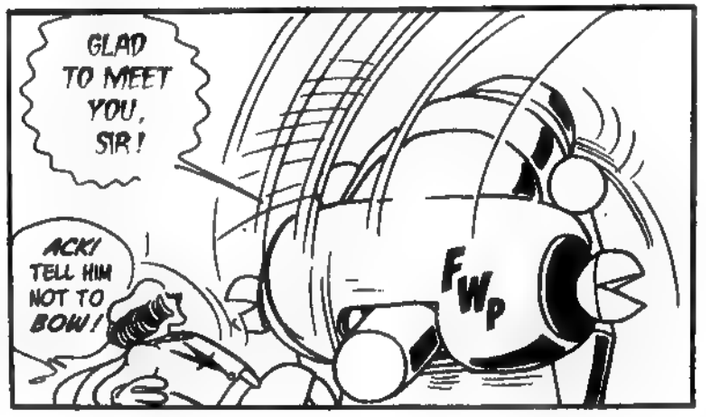

HIS ARMS ARE TOO SHORT TO BE USEFUL...

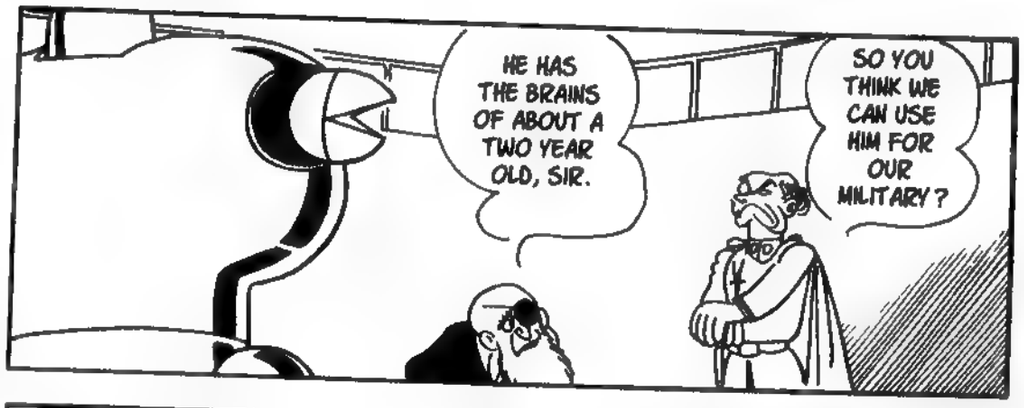

ZIP
ACK!

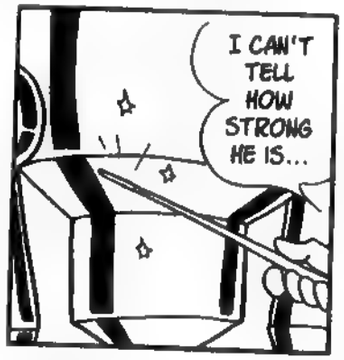

HIS BRAIN'S ADVANCED ENOUGH...
...TO UNDER-STAND MOST OF WHAT YOU SAY...


GIVES ME THE CREEPS...
...BUT HE CAN'T SPEAK VERY WELL...


HOKAY, BARO, SAY HELLO TO THE PRESIDENT!

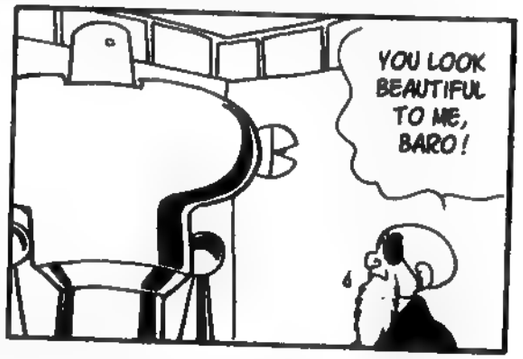

GLAD TO MEET YOU, SIR!
ACK! TELL HIM NOT TO BOW!
FWP

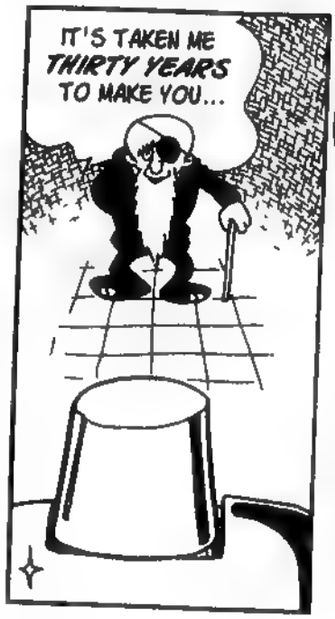

HE HAS THE BRAINS OF ABOUT A TWO YEAR OLD, SIR.
SO YOU THINK WE CAN USE HIM FOR OUR MILITARY?


I CAN'T TELL HOW STRONG HE IS...

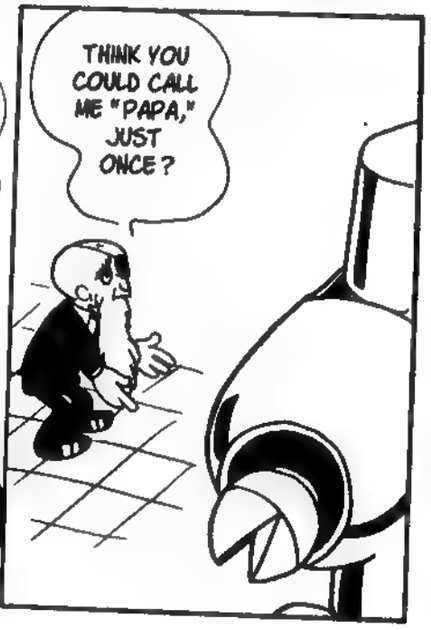

...BUT I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO TOMORROW'S TEST.
IF IT WORKS, YOU'LL GET A TEN-YEN RAISE, CARPON...


SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW...


YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL TO ME, BARO!


IT'S TAKEN ME THIRTY YEARS TO MAKE YOU...


...AND NOW I'M AN OLD MAN, WITH NEITHER WIFE NOR CHILDREN.


THINK YOU COULD CALL ME "PAPA," JUST ONCE?

COME ON, SAY IT...

BABA

NOT BA BA! PAPA!!

BA BA BA

ENOUGH! THE VOICE MECHANISM NEEDS MORE WORK...

BA BA, WHAT AM I FOR?

I'M GOING TO USE YOU IN TOMORROW'S EXPERIMENT!

WILL I BREAK DOWN?

I'M AFRAID SO...

IF THE TEST WORKS, YOU'RE DESIGNED TO *BLOW UP*...

THEN WHY DID YOU MAKE ME!?

BE-CAUSE, UM...

I DON'T WANT TO BREAK DOWN!

I LIKE THE WAY I AM!!

BUT I DESIGNED YOU TO BE *DESTROYED*, BARO!!

NO! NO!! NOO!

DON'T DESTROY ME, BABA

AIEE!

ARGHH!!

LEMME GO! HELP!

YOU'LL BREAK MY RIBS!

KABOOM

I KNOW YOU HAVE THE I.Q. OF A TWO YEAR OLD...

... BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO LET ME DOWN *GENTLY*!!

PEEP BEEP PEEP BEEP PIKO PIKO

LISTEN, BARO! YOU'RE GOING TO OBEY THE PRESIDENT, AND TAKE PART IN TOMORROW'S TEST! UNDER-STAND!?

GOOD NIGHT!

GOOD... NIGHT...

EARLY TO BED AND EARLY TO RISE. TOMORROW IT'S *GOOD-BYE TO BARO...*

I DON'T WANT TO DIE...

DON'T KILL ME, PAPA! WHY DID YOU CREATE ME?

ARGH! I CAN'T GET HIS VOICE OUT OF MY HEAD!

FORGIVE ME, BARO! I *HAVE* TO USE YOU FOR THE TEST TOMORROW!

IS IT BECAUSE I AM A ROBOT? IS IT BECAUSE I LOOK LIKE THIS?

WHAT IF I LOOKED LIKE THIS?

I'M ONLY TWO YEARS OLD!

NO! NO!

WOULD YOU STILL *KILL* ME, PAPA?

MY BEAUTIFUL SON! NO ONE COULD THINK OF KILLING YOU!

ARGH!! I WAS WRONG! ROBOTS AND HUMANS REALLY *ARE* THE SAME!!

WHA?!

I MUST'VE BEEN DREAMING!

IT'S 6 A.M. BRING THE ROBOT OUT!

TIME FOR THE TEST, BARO!

IT IS NOT MY TURN...

WHY YOU INSOLENT LUNKHEAD! TAKE *THIS!*

OWWW... TAKE HIM OUTSIDE *NOW!!*

HEY, *YOU* DO IT, PAL...

ME? DO IT YER-SELF!

HERE BOY... CANDY...

C'MON... CANDY...

CANDY?

HE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A *MOUTH*, YOU NUMBSKULL!

OH... YER RIGHT...

WANT CASH?

MONEY? *GIMME!*

WAIT!!

GOOD MORNING, PROFESSOR CARPON!

I NEED TO TALK TO THE PRESI-DENT...

BUT WE'RE STARTING THE TEST IN AN HOUR...

I NEED TO SPEAK TO YOU, SIR...

WHAT IS IT, PROFESSOR? YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED...

MY ROBOT'S NOT READY, SIR... IT'S BEST NOT TO USE HIM TODAY...

WHAT?!!

I SPENT HALF MY LIFE MAKING HIM!

BUT I CAN MAKE HIM EVEN BETTER! I JUST NEED MORE TIME!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, CARPON!?

HE'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR OUR PURPOSES!

NO MORE NONSENSE! START THE TEST!!

B... BUT I CAN'T KILL HIM...

WE'VE STAKED OUR *NATIONAL HONOR* ON THIS TEST!

... AND YOU'RE TRYING TO *DISCREDIT* US!!

I'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO ORDER YOUR ARREST, CARPON...

.....

.....

SHHWIP

COME ON OUT, BARO!

CHAAAK

CHAAAK

IT'S TIME FOR THE TEST, BARO!

THERE'S AN *H-BOMB* MISSILE OVER THERE. YOU'RE TO TAKE IT TO THE DESIGNATED SPOT AND *BLOW IT UP.*

IF THIS WORKS, YOU'LL BECOME A *NATIONAL HERO* AND GO DOWN IN HISTORY!

WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?

THE SCEN-ERY...

IT'S BEAU-TIFUL...

I'VE NEVER SEEN IT...

... AND I NEVER WILL AGAIN...

FOR I WILL SOON BE DEAD...

IT'S WHAT YOU WERE *DESIGNED* FOR, STUPID!

HURRY UP! WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME! GET THE H-BOMB!

WHERE IS BABA?

THE PROFESSOR? HE'S IN THE BLOCK-HOUSE WAITING TO WATCH THE TEST.

I SEE ...

CHAAK CHAAK

CHAAK CHAAK

PLEASE!!

LET ME SEE HIM ONE MORE TIME!

SORRY, PROFESSOR. THE PRESIDENT FORBIDS IT.

FARE-WELL, BABA ..

THE ROBOT HAS PUT THE WARHEAD INSIDE HIS BODY AND BEGUN WALKING TO THE DESIGNATED SITE, TWENTY MILES AWAY!

CHAAK CHAAK

UPON ARRIVAL, THE ROBOT WILL DETONATE THE H-BOMB!

CHAAK CHAAK

HE SHOULD REACH THE SITE IN TWO HOURS...

AND THEN HE BLOWS UP!

GENTLEMEN! THE EXPERIMENT OF THE CENTURY'S ABOUT TO START!

WITH THIS, PEAKOK WILL BECOME THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL NATION!

WE'LL MASS PRODUCE THESE ROBOTS AND BE ABLE TO SEND THEM ANY-WHERE!

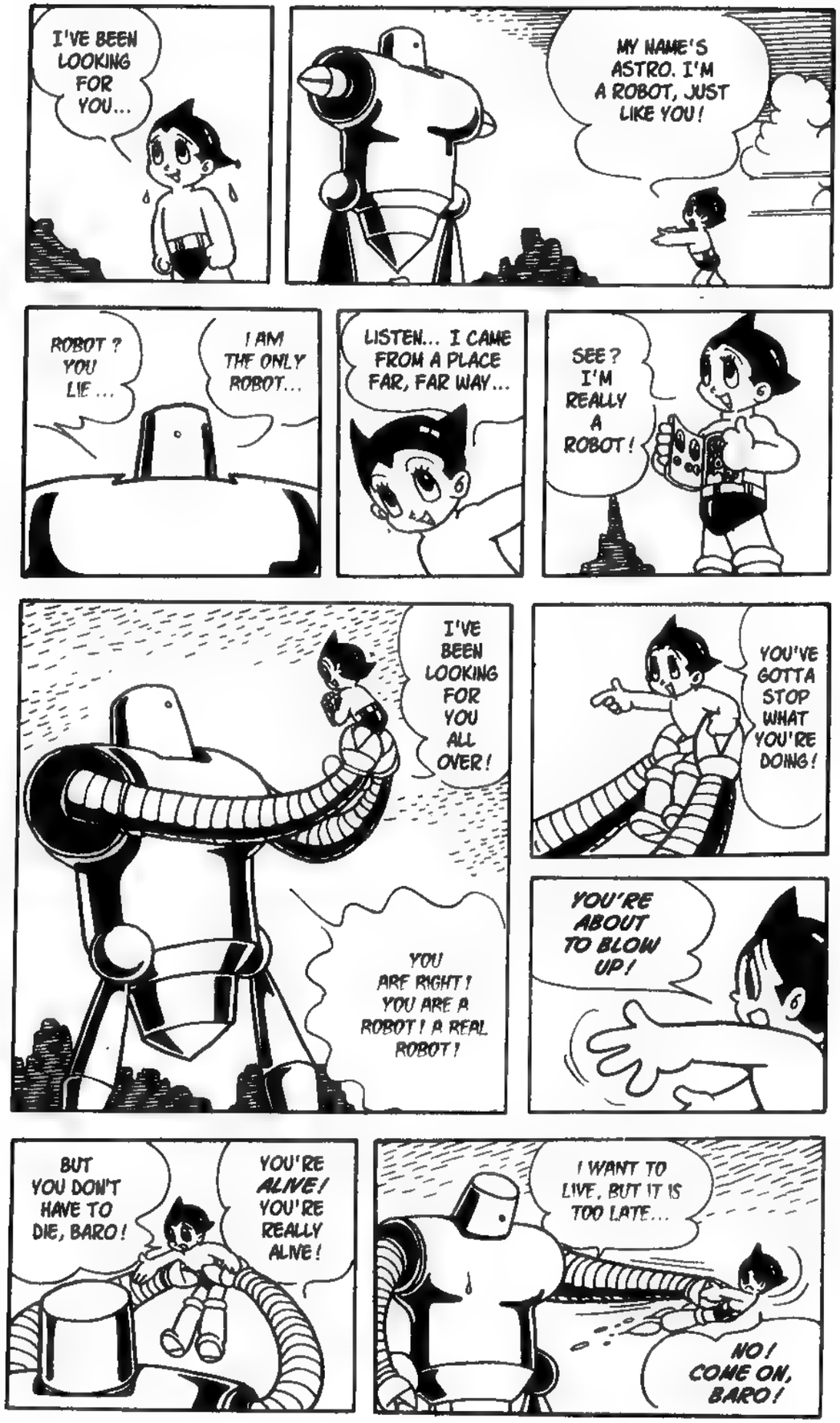
"THEY CAN WALK UNDER-SEA, OR UNDER-GROUND...

"... AND DELIVER LIVE H-BOMB'S ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD TO ATTACK THEIR TARGETS!"

CHAAK CHAAK

KOOK

HI, ARE YOU THE H-BOMB ROBOT?


I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU...
MY NAME'S ASTRO. I'M A ROBOT, JUST LIKE YOU!
ROBOT ? YOU LIE ...
I AM THE ONLY ROBOT...
LISTEN... I CAME FROM A PLACE FAR, FAR WAY...
SEE ? I'M REALLY A ROBOT!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU ALL OVER!
YOU ARE RIGHT! YOU ARE A ROBOT! A REAL ROBOT!
YOU'VE GOTTA STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
YOU'RE ABOUT TO BLOW UP!
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIE, BARO!
YOU'RE ALIVE! YOU'RE REALLY ALIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE, BUT IT IS TOO LATE...
NO! COME ON, BARO!


NO! IT IS NO USE! I HAVE A JOB TO DO!
BUT YOUR JOB'S NOT TO BLOW UP AN H-BOMB! ROBOTS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BECOME MURDERERS!
BESIDES... I'D BE LONELY...
I NEED A ROBOT FRIEND, BARO...
FRIEND ?
YEAH! WE CAN BE FRIENDS AND ESCAPE TOGETHER...
WE CAN TAKE THIS H-BOMB CAPSULE OUTA HERE, VERY CARE-FULLY...
...THEN SMASH IT AND BURY IT IN THE SAND.
AND THEN WE TAKE OFF...
THEY MAY FOLLOW US ON RADAR FOR AWHILE, THOUGH...
THE SKY! I AM FLYING!
WE'VE GOTTA HURRY AND HIDE IN THE MOUN-TAINS!

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO RUN AWAY FROM HUMANS, BARO. YOU'VE GOTTA BE STILL. IF YOU MOVE, THEY'LL COME AFTER YOU...

I'LL DIG A HOLE HERE, A NICE DEEP ONE...

...ABOUT 150 FEET DEEP...

YOU'LL HIDE IN IT SO THEY CAN'T DETECT YOU.

"IF YOU STAY BURIED TWO OR THREE YEARS, THE HUMANS WILL GIVE UP SEARCHING."

THEN, WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL, YOU CAN COME OUT, AND WE CAN GO TO MY COUNTRY...

I UNDER-STAND.

GOOD. NOW TO DIG THE HOLE.

ZOOOM

VROOOOM

ROOOOOAAAAR

UH OH! THEY'VE SPOTTED US!

VROOOOM

HURRY, BARO! HIDE IN HERE FOR NOW!!

RETRACT YOUR LIMBS SO YOU FIT IN THERE!

HERE IT COMES AGAIN!

THERE'S NO TIME!

?

TAKE THIS!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN LIFE!

THE RUDDER DOESN'T WORK!!

WHAT'S HAPPENING, CAP'N? FEELS LIKE SOMETHING'S CONTROLLING US!

HALP! WE'RE GOING DOWN! WE DON'T WANNA LAND!!

IT'S A CRASH LANDING !!!

I BETTER HIDE BARO BEFORE THE RADAR DETECTS HIM...

30 MORE FEET AND I'LL BE FINISHED DIGGING, BARO!

IT'S TOUGH, BUT YOU'LL BE FINE...

STAY STILL AND YOU'LL BE SAFE!

NOW TO FILL UP THE HOLE...

NOW NOBODY WILL EVER KNOW...

JUST STAY HERE FOR THREE YEARS ...

PROFESSOR CARPON... YOU HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF DEFYING THE PRESIDENT, A SERIOUS CRIME...

WE CAME HERE TO WARN YOU, PROFESSOR.

BUT WE WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU TRIED TO PROTECT THAT ROBOT...

BARO IS MY OWN SON... I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL HIM.

SON ?

BUT HE'S JUST A ROBOT ...

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT WHEN I WAS MAKING HIM...

BUT BARO'S REALLY ALIVE! HE'S *HUMAN!*

I DON'T GET IT, PROFESSOR. HOW CAN A ROBOT BE HUMAN?

YOU'D NEVER UNDERS-TAND...

BARO'S MY SON!

HOW COULD ANYONE SEND THEIR OWN SON TO HIS DEATH? I LOVE MY SON!

I SEE... SO THAT'S YOUR ANSWER...

I'M SURE HIS EXCELLENCY WILL NOT BE PLEASED.

PREPARE FOR YOUR PUNISHMENT, PROFESSOR!

SLAM

.....
.....

I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT TO LIVE...

I'D BETTER CONTACT BARO AND TELL HIM TO ESCAPE IMMEDIATELY!

I'LL USE THIS SECRET MIKE IN MY CANE AND CONTACT HIS ELECTRO-BRAIN...

BARO! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

BA BA... I HEAR BA BA...

BARO, IT'S ME, PROFESSOR CARPON! YOU ESCAPED!

BA BA...

BARO, I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE...

...BUT KEEP RUNNING! THEY'RE AFTER YOU!

I'LL FOLLOW YOU SOON, AND WE CAN LIVE IN HIDING SOMEWHERE!

COMMUNI-CATING WITH THE ROBOT USING YOUR CANE, EH?

UH OH...

CARPON! YOU TRAITOR!

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MAKER!

BLAM

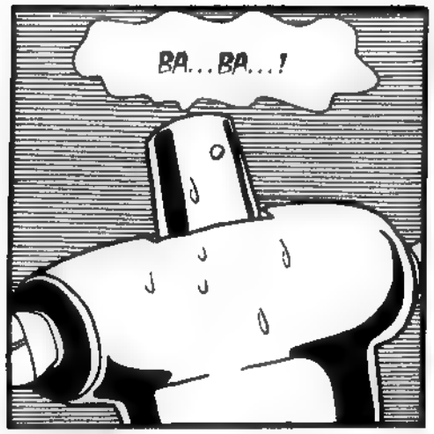
BLAM

YOU'RE NO LONGER NEEDED, CARPON.

WE CAN MAKE AS MANY COPIES OF BARO AS WE NEED.

BARO! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!

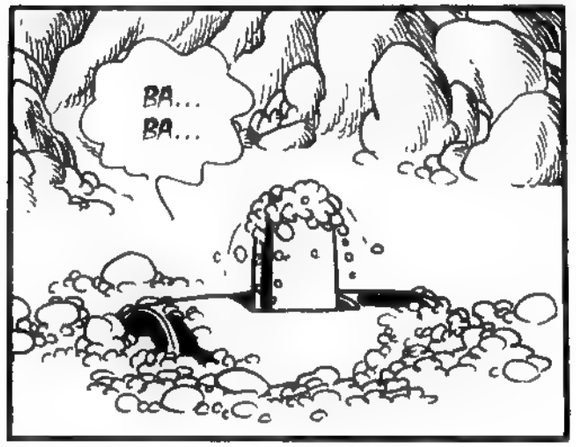
YOUR FATHER'S DEAD.

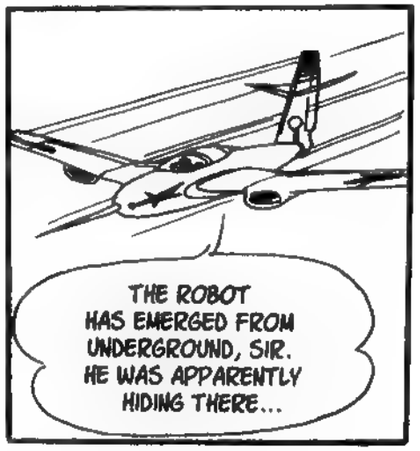

BA...BA...!

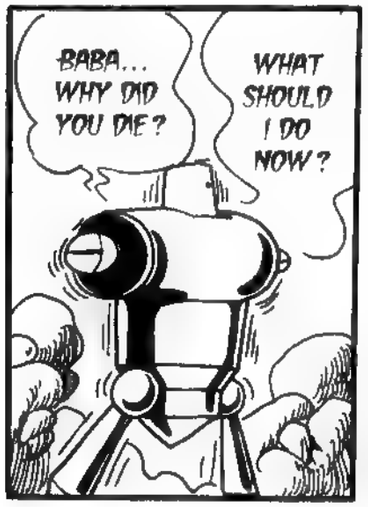

IF YOU COME OUT PEACEFULLY, BARO, WE'LL FORGET ABOUT THE EXPERIMENT...
'COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO DISASSEMBLE YOU FOR AN INSPECTION...

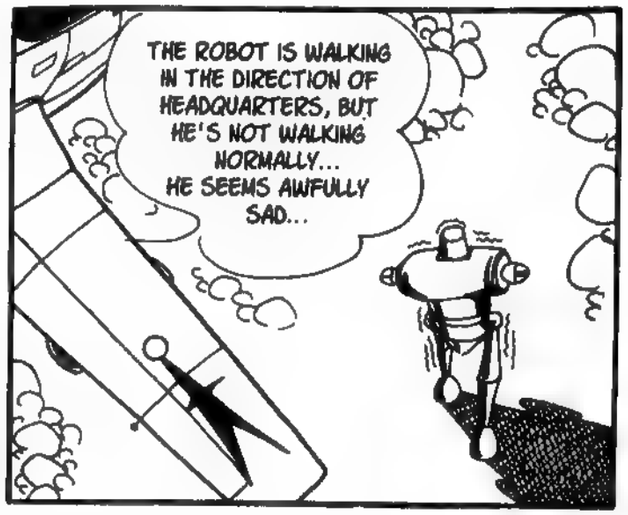

SO COME ON OUT... NOW!


RUMBLE

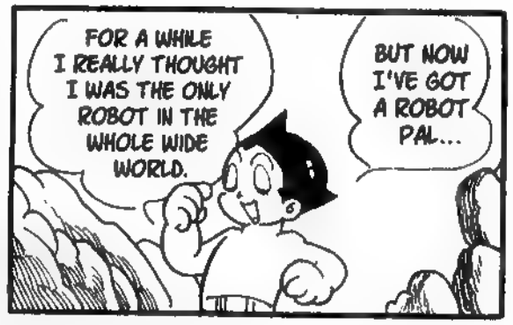

BA... BA...


THE ROBOT HAS EMERGED FROM UNDERGROUND, SIR. HE WAS APPARENTLY HIDING THERE...

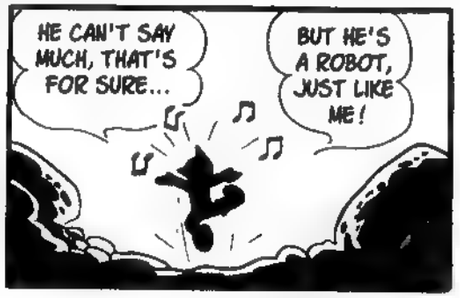

BABA... WHY DID YOU DIE?
WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

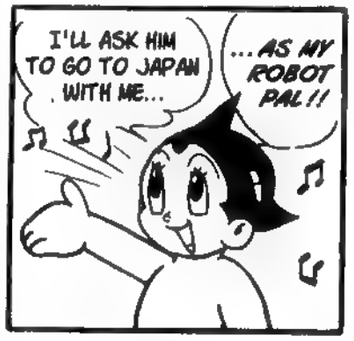

THE ROBOT IS WALKING IN THE DIRECTION OF HEADQUARTERS, BUT HE'S NOT WALKING NORMALLY... HE SEEMS AWFULLY SAD...


GOSH, I FEEL HAPPY...
I'D PROB'LY BURST IF I WERE ANY HAPPIER.


FOR A WHILE I REALLY THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ROBOT IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.
BUT NOW I'VE GOT A ROBOT PAL...

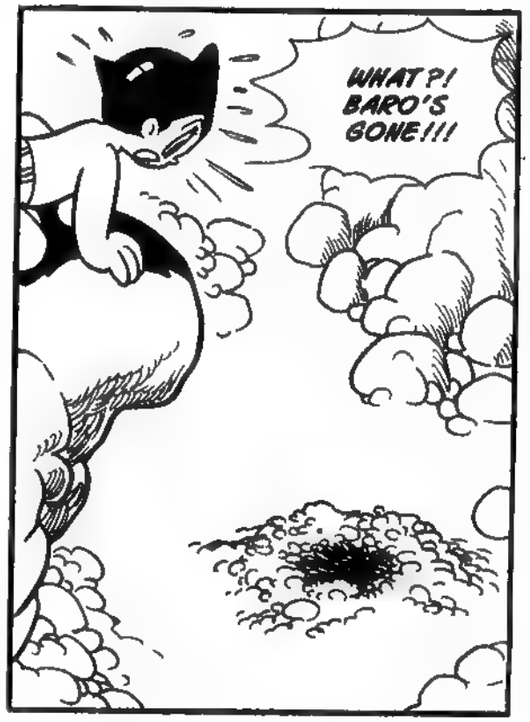

I KNOW BARO'S AN AWFULLY PRIMITIVE ROBOT,
BUT WHAT A HUGE AND GENTLE PAL HE IS.


HE CAN'T SAY MUCH, THAT'S FOR SURE...
BUT HE'S A ROBOT, JUST LIKE ME!

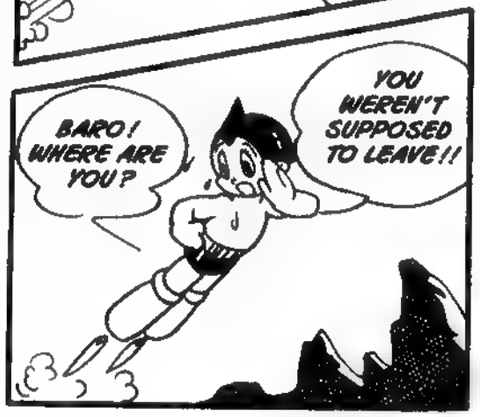

I'LL ASK HIM TO GO TO JAPAN WITH ME...
...AS MY ROBOT PAL!!




I HOPE HE STAYED IN HIS HOLE AND DIDN'T ATTRACT ATTENTION.


WHAT?! BARO'S GONE!!!


I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?
I HOPE THEY DIDN'T FIND HIM!!


BARO! WHERE ARE YOU?
YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO LEAVE!!

THE ROBOT'S HEADED DIRECTLY *HERE*, SIR!

...BUT THERE'S SOMETHING *WEIRD* ABOUT HIM!

WHAT'S WEIRD ABOUT COMING HERE?

HE'S NOT WALKING NORMALLY, SIR... HE SEEMS *CRAZED*!

LEMME SEE...

HE'S NOT NORMAL AT ALL... AT THAT SPEED HE'S OUT TO *DESTROY* SOMETHING!

STOP HIM!

IT'S USELESS, SIR! WE ALREADY TRIED!

WE'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO DESTROY HIM, SIR!

BUT WE CAN'T DESTROY HIM! IF WE DO WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO MAKE ANOTHER ROBOT LIKE HIM!

BUT SIR... HE'S ALMOST ON TOP OF US!!

YOU'D BETTER EVACUATE, SIR!

WE'RE IN DANGER, SIR!

IT'S TOO LATE!

SMASH

RUN FOR THE CAR!

NO ROBOT CAN CATCH US...

BAM RAM

HAALP!!

WHOOSH

KERSMASH

ARGHHH !

SMASH

BASH

THE PRESIDENT WAS KILLED WITH ONE BLOW...

HE WHAT ?

HE WAS FLAT-TENED!

VOOOSH

VOOSH

BA... BA...

KABOOM

KABAAM

VOOOSH

BA... BA... EVEN IF BROKEN... I AM WITH YOU... ALWAYS

UH OH ! AN EXPLOSION !

WHAT HAPPENED ?

THE ROBOT... BLEW UP !!

BARO ?!

THIS IS HIS HAND...

BARO ! YOU WERE ONLY MY FRIEND FOR ONE HOUR !!

THIS IS TERRIBLE ! HUMANS ! WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS TO MY FRIEND ?!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THAT AT 11AM TODAY, PRESIDENT BUNDELL DIED IN A TRAGIC ACCIDENT...

DRIVE IN

...ALSO KILLED WAS THE FAMOUS ROBOTICIST, PROFESSOR CARPON.

GOSH, ALL THEY DO IS TALK ABOUT THE HUMANS WHO DIED.

THEY DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT BARO...

...AS A RESULT, OUR NATION'S CONTINUED RESEARCH INTO GUIDED-WEAPON ROBOTS IS PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE...

THE ACCIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY A ROBOT GOING BERSERK...

AFTERNOON, SIR... CAN I GET AN OIL CHANGE DONE HERE?

SURE, SONNY... WHERE'S THE CAR...?

UM, IT'S FOR A ROBOT, NOT A CAR...

WHAT?! SAY, WHAT'YA GOT THERE?

IT'S A ROBOT HAND, FROM THE EXPLOSION AT THE TESTING GROUNDS...

W... W... WHAT'S GOING ON?

Y...YOU MEAN YOU WERE AT THE TEST SITE?

SURE...

YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT MURDERER ROBOT?

GET OUT! NOW!!

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT BARO?

I DON'T CARE WHAT HE'S CALLED!

I'M NOT GIVING HIM A DROP OF OIL!

SO SCRAM! I HATE ROBOTS!!

BUT, MISTER, BARO WASN'T A BAD ROBOT!

HE GOES BERSERK, CARRIES AROUND AN H-BOMB... WHO ARE YOU KIDDING?

NO! HE WAS A GOOD ROBOT! REALLY!

LISTEN HERE, SONNY...

ROBOTS ARE THE WORST THING HUMANS EVER INVENTED.

IT'S 'CAUSE THEY DO BAD THINGS, JUST LIKE PEOPLE!

JUST TRY 'N CRITICIZE BARO ONE MORE TIME...

AND WHAT IF I DO?

ACK! W... WHAT'RE YOU DOING P!!

HOW DARE YOU TALK LIKE THAT ABOUT ROBOTS!

MURDERER!!

.....
.....
.....

GASP PANT GASP

UM... I'M SORRY...

I'M REALLY SORRY. BUT COULD YOU SELL ME SOME OF YOUR ENGINE OIL ANYWAY?

OK, OK...

YOU SCARED THE BEESWAX OUT OF ME...

I DON'T NEED THAT MUCH...

YOU'RE NOT TAKING IT TO YOUR CAR?

DON'T LOOK, OKAY?

EGADS!

SPOING

I TOLD YOU NOT TO LOOK!

IT'S OIL CHANGE TIME.

AFTER ALL THE WORK I'VE DONE, I REALLY NEEDED THAT...

WONDER HOW MUCH ENERGY I'VE GOT...

WHA? ONLY SIX MONTHS!!

GUESS I'VE BEEN A LITTLE TOO ACTIVE...

IN SIX MONTHS... I'LL FALL DOWN AND THAT'LL BE THE END OF ME...

THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES, I GUESS...

HOPE YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING WHEN YOU COME TO, POPS...

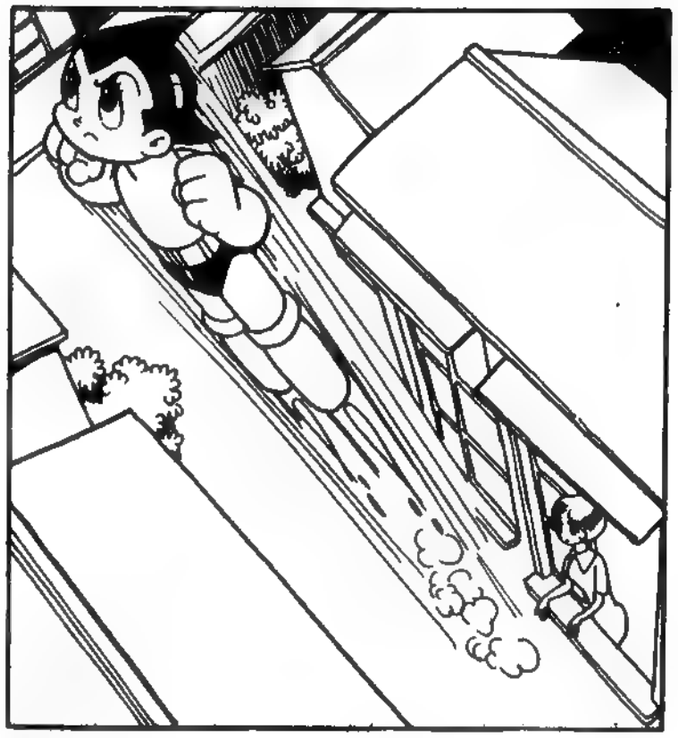
SAYONARA, BARO. YOU'LL SLEEP FOREVER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.



SCARA DISAPPEARS

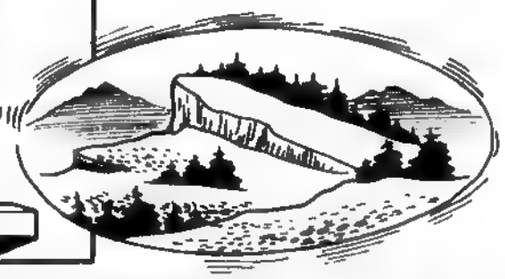
UP TO THIS POINT THE FOCUS OF THIS STORY HAS BEEN ON ASTRO, BUT NOW WE RETURN TO SCARA. WHEN MORNING CAME, SHE OPENED THE CURTAINS OF HER APARTMENT WINDOW AND STARED OUT OVER TOKYO'S SEA OF ROOFS, WATCHING THE CITY COME ALIVE.

"WHAT A DIRTY AND DUSTY PLACE," SHE SAID TO HERSELF. "THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I CAME HERE TO SEE EARTH'S BEAUTIFUL NATURAL SCENERY, AND HERE I AM STUCK INDOORS..."

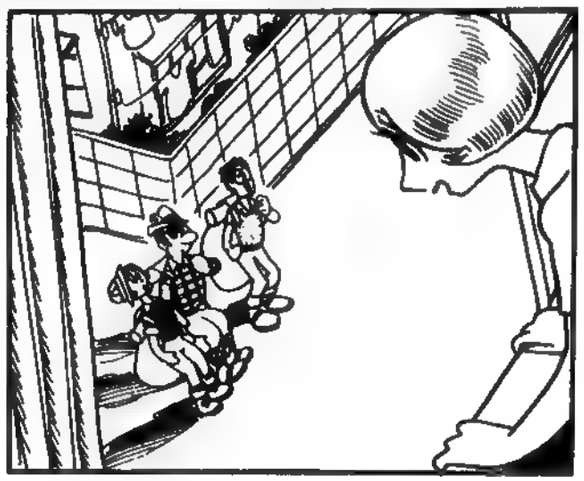




JUST AS SCARA SIGHED, SHE SAW THREE PEOPLE ON THEIR WAY TO GO HIKING IN THE MOUNTAINS.



"HI, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?" SHE CALLED OUT, AS IF SHE KNEW THEM WELL. "TO THE MOUNTAINS? CAN I COME, TOO?"













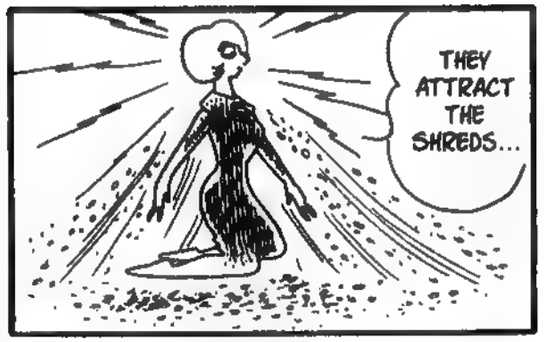










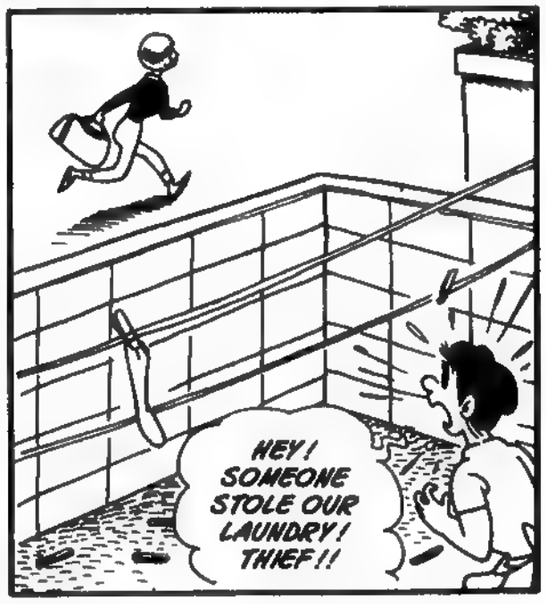








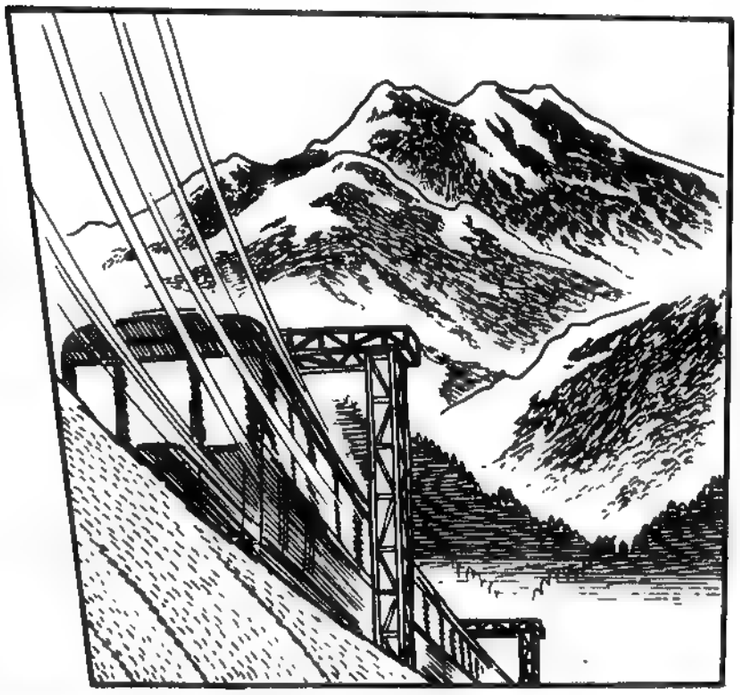


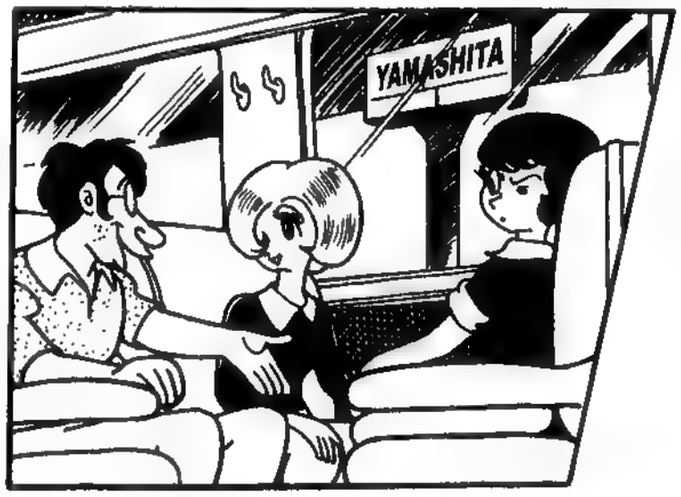






THROUGH THE FORCE OF HER PERSONALITY, SCARA GOT THE GROUP TO TAKE HER WITH THEM. THE TRAIN LEFT TOKYO AND ZOOMED THROUGH COUNTRY FIELDS ON ITS WAY TO THE MOUNTAINS.





SCARA WAS ENTRANCED BY THE GREEN FIELDS AND FORESTS ALL AROUND HER. IT WAS WHAT SHE HAD ALWAYS DREAMED OF SEEING. THE TWO MEN AT FIRST THOUGHT SCARA'S REACTION WAS A LITTLE OVER-BLOWN, BUT THEN THEY STARTED TO ENJOY HER PRESENCE AND TO TEASE HER IN A FRIENDLY FASHION.

"THIS YOUR FIRST TIME OUTSIDE OF TOKYO?"

"YES. I'VE NEVER SEEN MOUNTAINS BEFORE..."

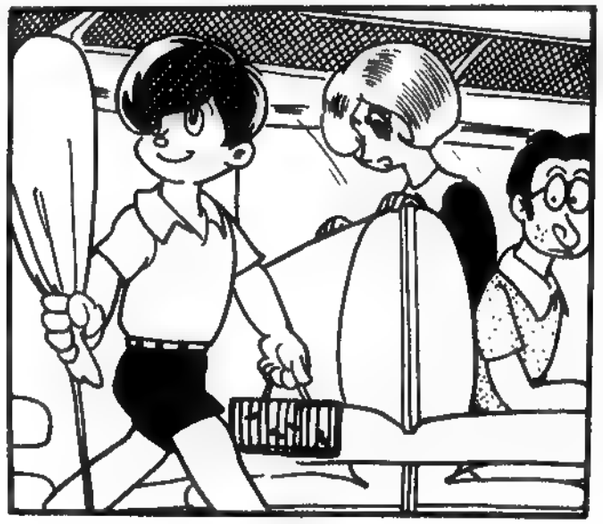
"YOU'RE KIDDING! DIDN'T YOU EVER GO ON FIELD TRIPS IN SCHOOL?!"

"WHAT'S A FIELD TRIP?"

"OH, COME ON... YOU MUST BE PULLING OUR LEGS..."

"PULLING YOUR LEGS?"

JUST THEN A BOY WITH A BUTTERFLY NET AND A LITTLE INSECT CAGE WALKED DOWN THE AISLE...



WAIT! SHOW ME WHAT'S IN THAT CAGE!

THEY'RE LOCUSTS ...

LOCUSTS?

YOU CAN EVEN EAT THOSE...

LOCUSTS... LOCUSTS...

THERE ARE LOCUSTS ON EARTH?

?

WHAT'S SO UNUSUAL ABOUT LOCUSTS?

YEAH, THEY EVEN SELL 'EM IN DEPARTMENT STORES!

POOR THINGS... I'LL LET YOU GO FREE...

HEY! STOP !!

THERE GOES MY HOMEWORK PROJECT!

SPROING

WHAAA! MY LOCUSTS GOT AWAY! I HATE YOU, LADY!

WHERE'D YOU GET THEM? TELL ME WHERE THEY LIVE!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT FOLKS! NO PROBLEM!

DON'T CRY, SONNY... HERE HAVE SOME CANDY...

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, LADY. YOU'RE NOT S'POSED TO GET SO EXCITED OVER SOME INSECTS...

FRANKLY, THAT WOMAN GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

HEY, TAKE IT EASY... SHE'S PROB'LY ONE OF THOSE SUPER-PACIFIST TYPES WHO NEVER KILLS BUGS, Y'KNOW...

AREN'T THERE ANY INSECTS BIGGER THAN THAT?

NAW... IF THERE WERE, THEY'D STAR IN MONSTER MOVIES...

AMAZING... THOSE INSECTS ARE THE SAME SPECIES AS I AM... I FEEL LIKE I'VE FOUND RELATIVES ON EARTH!

?

WELL, HERE WE ARE!

EEEEEK!

EXOTIC LOCAL DELICACIES

LOCUSTS IN SOY PASTE

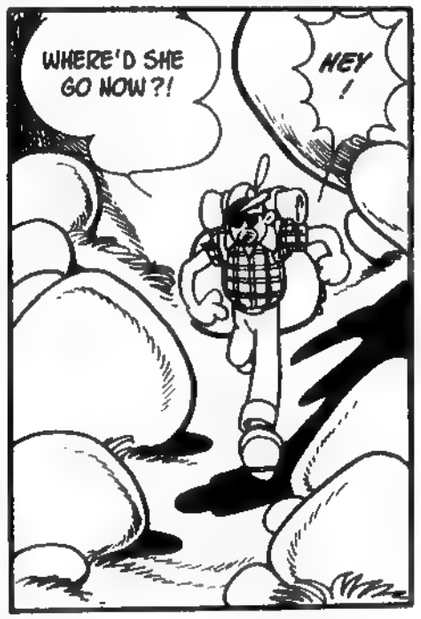
THUD

SHE SURE FAINTED IN A WEIRD POSITION...

HEH HEH... DON'T MIND US...


COCKOO
COCKOO

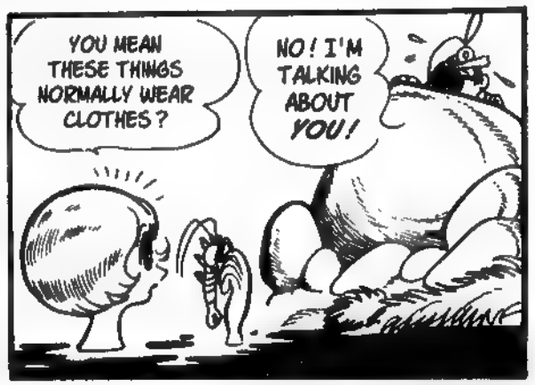

SO HOW DO YOU LIKE THE MOUNTAINS?
WHAT THE --?


WHERE'D SHE GO NOW?!
HEY!


LOOK WHAT I FOUND IN THE WATER!


...ALL THESE LIVING THINGS!

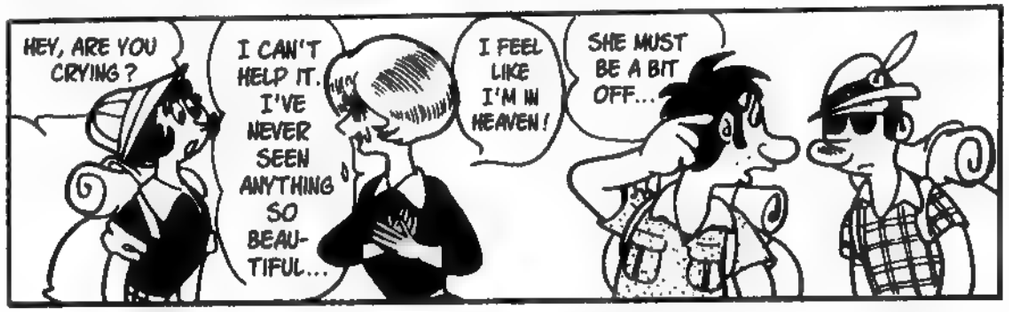

WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU AFRAID OF FISH?
NO... BUT WITHOUT ANY CLOTHES...

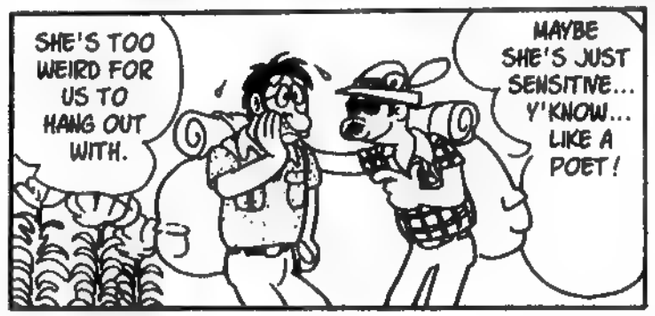

YOU MEAN THESE THINGS NORMALLY WEAR CLOTHES?
NO! I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU!


THERE'S A MARSHY AREA AROUND HERE WITH LOTS OF MOUNTAIN PLANTS...


WHAT DO EARTH PEOPLE SAY WHEN THEY'RE OVERJOYED?

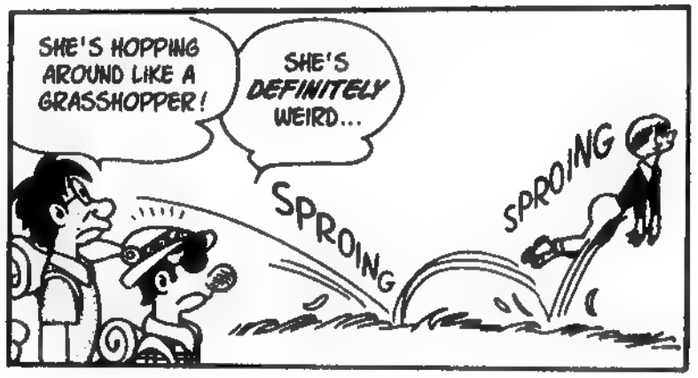

HMPH
THEY PROBABLY SCREAM 'N SAY IT'S UNBELIEV-ABLE...


HEY, ARE YOU CRYING?
I CAN'T HELP IT. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO BEAU-TIFUL...
I FEEL LIKE I'M IN HEAVEN!
SHE MUST BE A BIT OFF...


SHE'S TOO WEIRD FOR US TO HANG OUT WITH.
MAYBE SHE'S JUST SENSITIVE... Y'KNOW... LIKE A POET!


FRANKLY, I FIND THAT KINDA ATTRAC-TIVE...


THAT'S THE WAY A POET ACTS?


SHE'S HOPPING AROUND LIKE A GRASSHOPPER!
SHE'S DEFINITELY WEIRD...
SPROING
SPROING

AH, THE FRAGRANCE OF GREEN GRASS!

THE FEEL OF FRESH SOIL!

LET HER GO. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE...

SHE'S TOO MUCH FOR US, PAL...

GO ON AHEAD... I INVITED HER, SO I FEEL RESPONSIBLE...

NEVER LEARN, DO YOU ...?

YOO HOO! SCARA!

WE'RE GOING BACK! THERE'S POISONOUS SNAKES AROUND HERE!

WHA? WHAT ARE YOU ROLLING ABOUT ON THE GROUND FOR?

I'VE DECIDED NOT TO GO BACK. I'M GOING TO LIVE HERE.

ARE YOU *NUTS*? WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO? LIVE IN A HOLE IN THE GROUND?

HOLE ?

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA! I'LL *DIG* ONE!

HEY! ENOUGH'S ENOUGH!!

WHY CAN'T I LIVE HERE?

COME ON, LET'S GO. YOU CAN'T LIVE IN THIS STUPID PLACE!

WHAT'S STUPID ABOUT IT? YOU CAME HERE, TOO, RIGHT?

RRRR

CIVILIZATION'S OVER-DEVELOPED WHERE I'M FROM...

WHEREVER YOU GO IT'S CITY AFTER CITY, SO I'VE DREAMED OF A PLACE LIKE THIS...

WHERE YOU'RE FROM? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I'M FROM A PLANET FAR, FAR FROM HERE.

LISTEN, I'VE HAD *ENOUGH!*

YOU'VE GOTTA LOT OF NERVE, SPOUTING THIS NONSENSE...

...AND PRETENDING YOU CAN'T KILL INSECTS...

BUT *YOU* WOULDN'T KILL INSECTS, WOULD YOU?

I'VE HAD ENOUGH NONSENSE OUT OF YOU!!

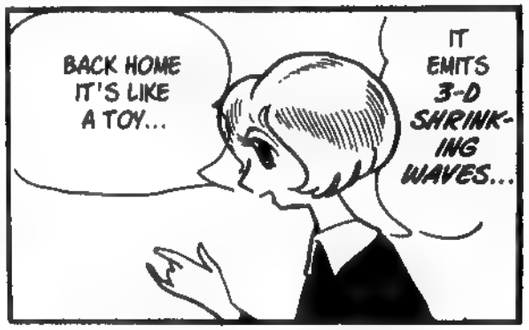

ALL THIS STUFF ABOUT ANOTHER PLANET... HMPH! GIMME A BREAK!


HEY! LISTEN TO ME! I'M TALKING TO YOU!


WHAT'S THAT?


SOME SORT OF TRANSIS-TOR RADIO?

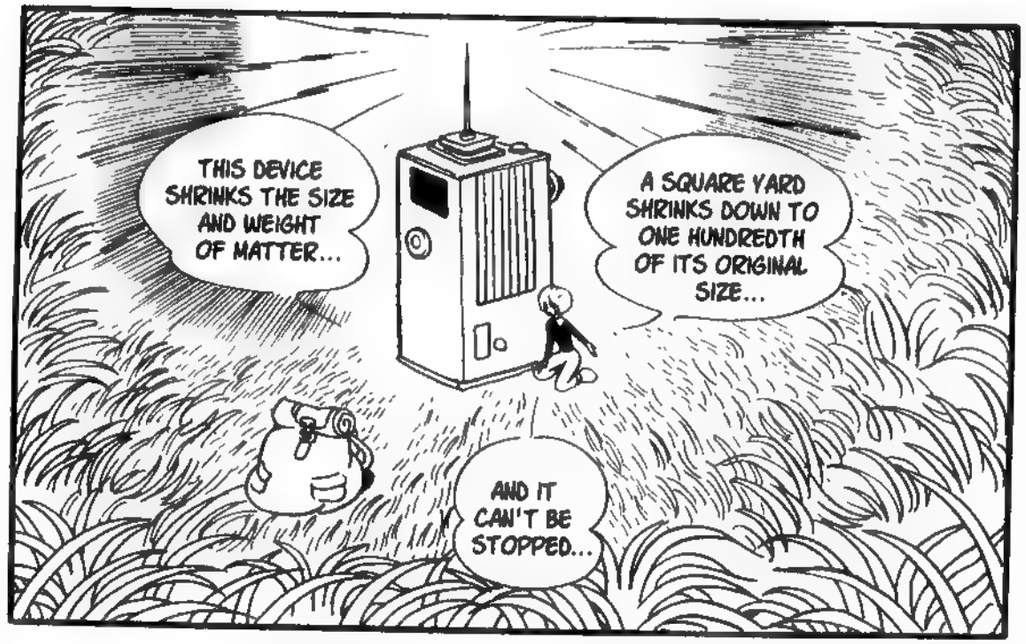

IF YOU SAY YOU BROUGHT THIS FROM ANOTHER PLANET ...
... I'M NOT BUYING YOUR NONSENSE!


BACK HOME IT'S LIKE A TOY...
IT EMITS 3-D SHRINK-ING WAVES...

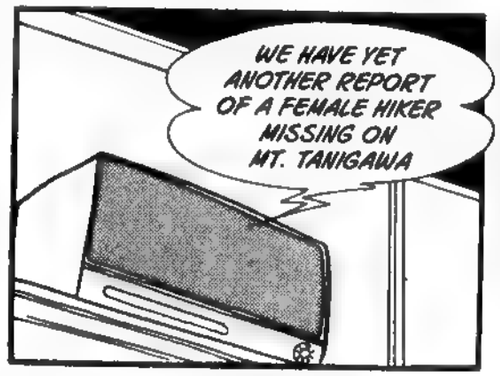

'SEEMS LIKE IT'S GETTING BIGGER!

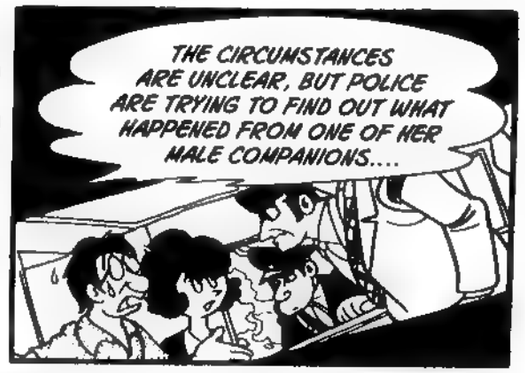

WHAT'S GOING ON?! IT IS GETTING BIGGER AND BIGGER!


SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT...
YOU'D BETTER RUN AWAY... OTHERWISE YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO RETURN TO NORMAL...


THIS DEVICE SHRINKS THE SIZE AND WEIGHT OF MATTER...
A SQUARE YARD SHRINKS DOWN TO ONE HUNDREDTH OF ITS ORIGINAL SIZE...
AND IT CAN'T BE STOPPED...

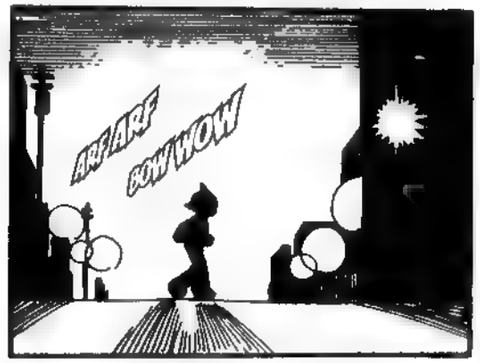

HELP! STOP!!


WE HAVE YET ANOTHER REPORT OF A FEMALE HIKER MISSING ON MT. TANIGAWA


THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE UNCLEAR, BUT POLICE ARE TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED FROM ONE OF HER MALE COMPANIONS....


"ACCORDING TO HIM, THE YOUNG FEMALE HE WAS WITH..."


"... MUST HAVE BECOME DISORIENTED AND LOST."
"THE MT. TANIGAWA SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM SAY THEY'LL SEARCH AGAIN AT DAYLIGHT..."


ARFARF
BOW WOW





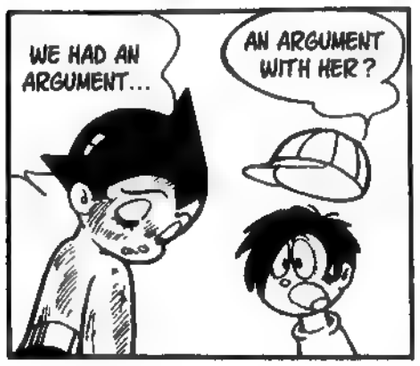

WHA
P!

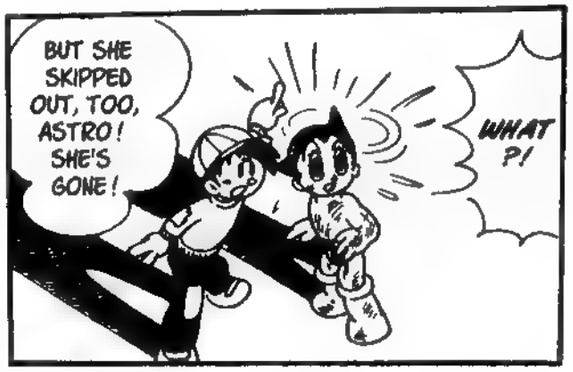

ASTRO! YOU'RE BACK!
SHIN-CHAN!

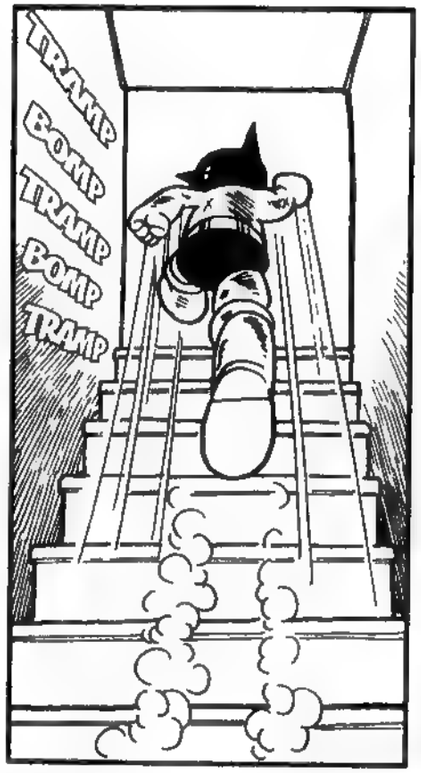

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN OFF WANDERING? I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU, I CAME HERE EVERYDAY!
I'M SORRY, SHIN-CHAN... I RAN AWAY...
YOU SURE ARE A MESS!


YOU RAN AWAY?!

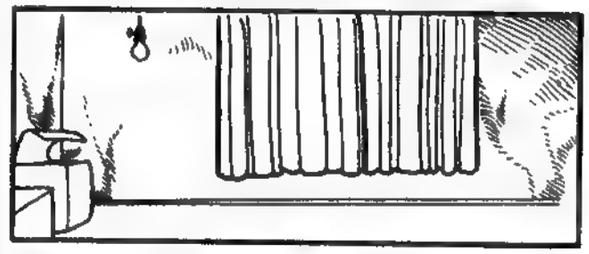

I RAN AWAY FROM SCARA...

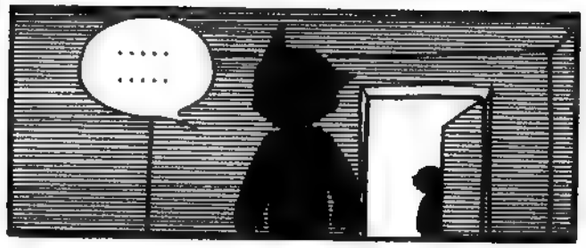

WE HAD AN ARGUMENT...
AN ARGUMENT WITH HER?


BUT SHE SKIPPED OUT, TOO, ASTRO! SHE'S GONE!
WHAT P!


TRAMP
BOMP
TRAMP
BOMP
TRAMP


SLAM




.....
.....


YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHEN SHE LEFT AND WHERE SHE WENT?
DIDN'T YOU READ THE NEWSPAPER, ASTRO?
THE POLICE WERE HERE, YOU KNOW...


THE... THE POLICE?! BUT WHY?!


THEY HAD A SEARCH WARRANT. IT WAS BIG NEWS...


YOUR SISTER WENT TO MT. TANIGAWA AND DISAPPEARED...
SHE'S IN THE MOUNTAINS P!!

SO BASICALLY, ASTRO...

...THE POLICE SEARCHED FOR HER, BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF HER ANYWHERE...

THIS IS *TER-RIBLE!*

I'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING! I'VE GOTTA GO LOOK FOR HER MYSELF!

BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO THAT THE POLICE HAVEN'T?

WE ROBOTS HAVE OUR OWN WAY OF SEARCHING, SHIN-CHAN.

WHOOPS! I ALMOST FORGOT YOU'RE A ROBOT...

BUT IF YOU'RE A ROBOT, SCARA'S NOT REALLY YOUR SISTER, IS SHE...

NO, SHE'S NOT, SHIN-CHAN.

WHO IS SHE THEN?

SHE'S NOT MY SISTER...

...BUT SHE'S AS IMPORTANT TO ME AS A REAL SISTER!

I KNOW SHE LOVED THE FIELDS AND MOUNTAINS ON EARTH...

... AND HERE I MADE HER LIVE IN THAT CROWDED APARTMENT IN TOKYO...

NO WONDER SHE WANTED TO RUN AWAY TO THE MOUNTAINS...

ACCORDING TO SHIN-CHAN, SHE DISAPPEARED SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE...

HMM. I CAN SEE WHY IT'D BE HARD TO FIND HER...

BUT WE ROBOTS...

...DON'T SEARCH LIKE HUMANS...

HEY... THAT'S ODD!!

CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP

STRANGE... SEEM'S LIKE NOTHING GROWS VERY WELL RIGHT HERE...

CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP

I WONDER IF IT'S BEEN SPRAYED WITH SOMETHING...

WAIT A MINUTE! THIS IS A *BELLFLOWER*... THERE ARE BELLFLOWERS GROWING HERE!

THEY'RE JUST AWFULLY SMALL...

THIS IS REALLY WEIRD...

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT...

HOLD ON!

THIS BELONGED TO SCARA!

SHE MUST BE AROUND HERE!

I'LL SET MY HEARING POWER TO 1000.

CHIRP BZZZ ASTRO CHIRREN HUMM CHEE! CHIRP CHIRP

WAIT, I HEAR SCARA!!

SHE'S CALLING ME FROM SOMEWHERE!

CHIRP CHEE! ASTRO CHIRP CHIRP

MUST BE OVER HERE!

ASTRO

THERE SHE IS!

ASTRO ...

SCARA! WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'RE SO *TINY*!

IT'S 'CAUSE OF THAT *DEVICE* YOU PICKED UP. IT'S A *SHRINKER*!

BUT WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOU LOOK LIKE A LITTLE INSECT...

YOU'RE RIGHT. I DECIDED TO BECOME THE SAME SIZE...

...AS MOST INSECTS ARE ON EARTH...

YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING, SCARA! YOU'RE A HUMAN, RIGHT?

WELL, SORT OF... BUT WE EVOLVED FROM INSECTS.

I CAME TO EARTH BECAUSE THIS IS THE SORT OF LIFE I WANT TO LEAD...

SCARA, YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

BUT I'M SICK OF HUMAN CITIES, ASTRO. THEY'RE TOO NOISY AND DIRTY AND DANGER-OUS...

BUT THERE'S LOTS OF DANGEROUS INSECTS, TOO, SCARA!

I'LL BE ALL RIGHT. ASTRO. LET ME BE FREE...

WELL, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU REALLY FEEL...

GOOD BYE, ASTRO! I HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY LIVING IN TOKYO!

I'M SURE YOU CAN FIND MUCH BETTER FRIENDS THAN ME...

BUT SCARA... WINTER'S COMING SOON AND IT'LL GET COLD AND THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING TO EAT. WHAT'LL YOU DO?

I'LL THINK OF SOME-THING...

SCARA! DON'T I EVER GET TO SEE YOU AGAIN?

.....
.....

ASTRO'S COMING BACK!

YOOSH

NO LUCK?!

WHAT HAPPENED, ASTRO?

ARE YOU CRYING?

GOSH, I DIDN'T KNOW ROBOTS COULD EVEN DO THAT...

SHIN-CHAN! I FEEL SO ALL ALONE!

WOW, ASTRO, YOU REALLY *ARE* CRYING. ARE THOSE REAL TEARS?

IT'S JUST WATER, BUT THEY'RE REAL TEARS TO ME...

SHIN-CHAN... YOU'RE THE ONLY FRIEND I HAVE LEFT...

DON'T WORRY, ASTRO... I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU...

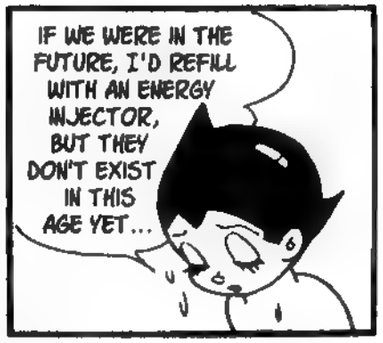
THANKS, SHIN-CHAN... BUT I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU SOON...

WHEN ROBOTS RUN OUT OF ENERGY THEY STOP WORKING...

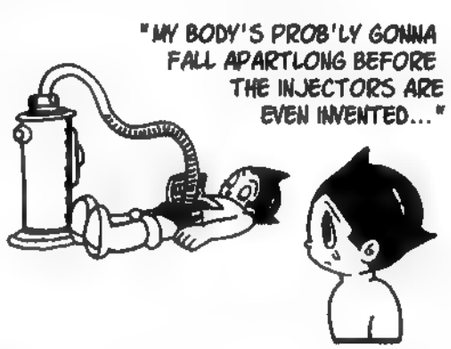
IN LESS THAN SIX MONTHS, I WON'T HAVE ANY MORE ENERGY LEFT...

WHAT?!

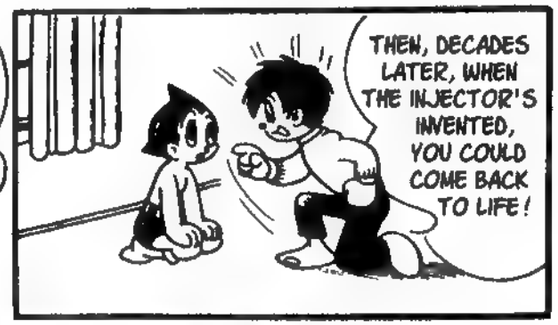

BUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN THE ENERGY RUNS OUT ?
I COLLAPSE AND BECOME LIKE A LIFELESS DOLL...


IF WE WERE IN THE FUTURE, I'D REFILL WITH AN ENERGY INJECTOR, BUT THEY DON'T EXIST IN THIS AGE YET...

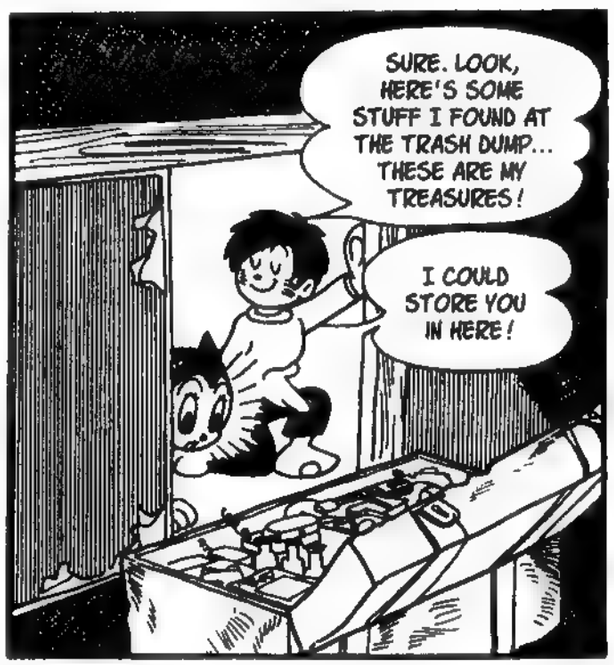

GOSH... IT SOUNDS HOPELESS...


"MY BODY'S PROB'LY GONNA FALL APARTLONG BEFORE THE INJECTORS ARE EVEN INVENTED..."


WAIT! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
I COULD STORE YOUR BODY IN A SAFE PLACE...

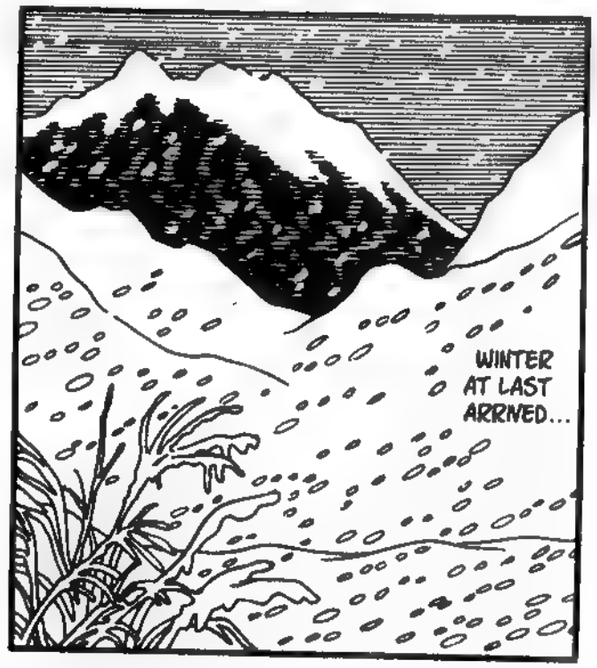

THEN, DECADES LATER, WHEN THE INJECTOR'S INVENTED, YOU COULD COME BACK TO LIFE!

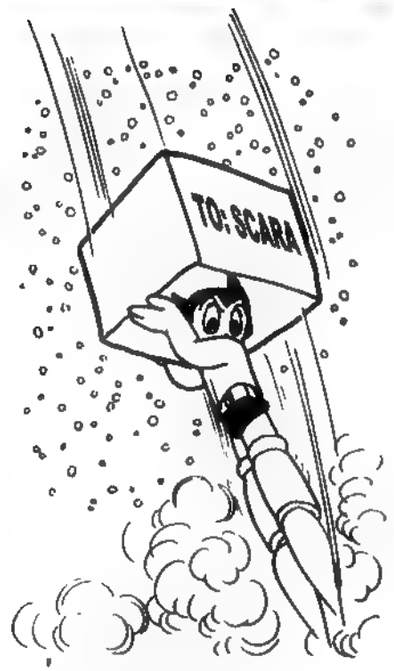

REALLY? YOU'D STORE ME TILL THEN?


SURE. LOOK, HERE'S SOME STUFF I FOUND AT THE TRASH DUMP... THESE ARE MY TREASURES!
I COULD STORE YOU IN HERE!


AUTUMN WINDS BEGAN TO BLOW...


AND ON MT. TANIGAWA...


WINTER AT LAST ARRIVED...


TO: SCARA


SCARA! WHERE ARE YOU?
I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME FOOD!!
TO: SCARA


ALL I CAN HEAR IS THE SOUND OF THE WIND. MAYBE SHE CAN'T HEAR ME...
WH
OSH


OR MAYBE SHE'S GONE INTO HIBERNATION...
TO: SCARA

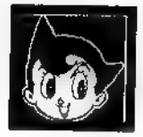

I'LL WRITE HER A LETTER...
TO: SCARA

Dear Scara,

I'm leaving some food here for you.
it should last you through the winter,
and help you make it till spring.
I'm going to run out of energy before then,
so I might never see you again .
I wish the best for you always.
be careful not to get caught by insect
collectors in the summer and sold
at a department store.

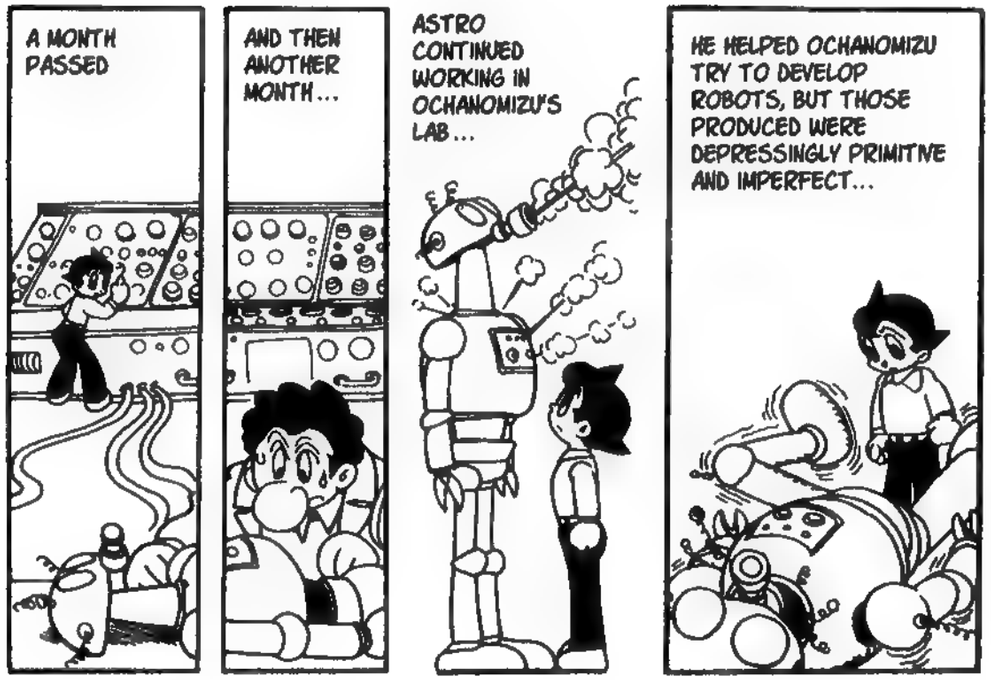
Sayonara


FROM YOUR "BROTHER," ASTRO...
TO: SCARA
I'VE USED UP ANOTHER MONTH OF FUEL...
EVEN FLYING WASTES ENERGY...
TO: SCARA
I WONDER HOW LONG SCARA CAN LIVE. IF I COME BACK TO LIFE DECADES FROM NOW, I WONDER
...IF SHE'LL STILL BE ALIVE...



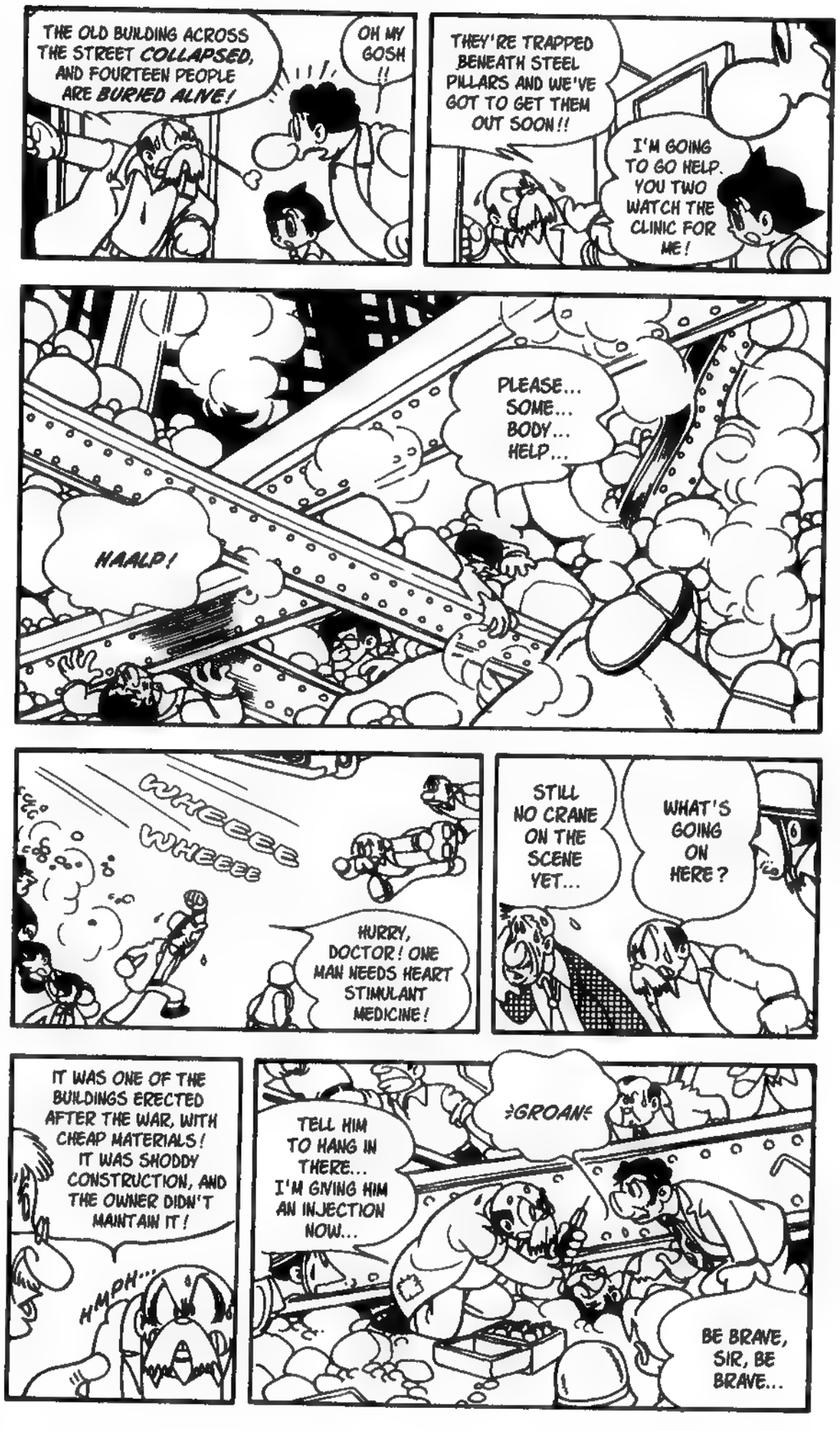
THE ENERGY TUBE


DEPARTMENTS OF SURGERY/
INTERNAL MEDICINE/
PEDIATRICS/ RADIOLOGY.


A MONTH PASSED
AND THEN ANOTHER MONTH...
ASTRO CONTINUED WORKING IN OCHANOMIZU'S LAB...
HE HELPED OCHANOMIZU TRY TO DEVELOP ROBOTS, BUT THOSE PRODUCED WERE DEPRESSINGLY PRIMITIVE AND IMPERFECT...


CRASH
CHAK
#5 FAILED, TOO.
BOM
THERE WENT #6!
SMASH
#8 FAILED, TOO!
KABOOM
I CAN HARDLY STAND TO WATCH THIS...
WHEN'S HE GOING TO MAKE SOME FRIENDS OF MINE?
WONDER IF I SHOULD TELL HIM I'M REALLY A ROBOT...
IF HE USED ME AS A MODEL, HE COULD SUCCEED...
I'LL TELL HIM!
MR. OCHANOMIZU! I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING!
?


MR. OCHANOMIZU... I...I...
I'M A ROBOT!!
DON'T TELL HIM, ASTRO! THINK WHAT'LL HAPPEN!
"IMAGINE WHAT IT'D BE LIKE IF THE U.S. OR U.S.S.R STARTED MASS-PRODUCING ROBOTS!!"
"IMAGINE IF SOMEONE LIKE PRESIDENT BUNDELL OF PEAKOKU..."
"...STARTED USING ASTRO-STYLE ROBOTS AS WEAPONS..."
YOU MUSTN'T TELL HIM YOU'RE A ROBOT, ASTRO...
AT THE RISK OF BREAKING DOWN...
...OR RUNNING OUT OF ENERGY....
YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP IT A SECRET...
WHAT IS IT, ASTRO?
IT'S... ER... UM... NOTHING...
OCHANOMIZU! WE'VE GOT AN EMERGENCY!
WHAT HAPPENED, DOCTOR?


THE OLD BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET COLLAPSED, AND FOURTEEN PEOPLE ARE BURIED ALIVE!
OH MY GOSH !!
THEY'RE TRAPPED BENEATH STEEL PILLARS AND WE'VE GOT TO GET THEM OUT SOON!!
I'M GOING TO GO HELP. YOU TWO WATCH THE CLINIC FOR ME!
HAALP!
PLEASE... SOME... BODY... HELP...
wheeee
wheeee
HURRY, DOCTOR! ONE MAN NEEDS HEART STIMULANT MEDICINE!
STILL NO CRANE ON THE SCENE YET...
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
IT WAS ONE OF THE BUILDINGS ERECTED AFTER THE WAR, WITH CHEAP MATERIALS! IT WAS SHODDY CONSTRUCTION, AND THE OWNER DIDN'T MAINTAIN IT!
HMPH...
TELL HIM TO HANG IN THERE... I'M GIVING HIM AN INJECTION NOW...
GROAN
BE BRAVE, SIR, BE BRAVE...


GROAN!
HIS PULSE IS WEAKENING! WE NEED HELP!
SOME OF THE OTHERS WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER, EITHER!
THE AMBULANCE IS HERE...
BUT THERE'S NO CRANE!
AND WITHOUT THAT WE CAN'T GET THEM OUT!
THE CRANE'S CAUGHT IN RUSH HOUR AND CAN'T BUDGE!
MAYBE WE COULD CUT THE BEAMS WITH A WELDING TORCH!
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT!!
HOW MUCH LONGER TIL YOU GET HERE?!
WHAT? THIRTY MIN-UTES MORE?!
AT THIS RATE WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TEN MINUTES!
WE'VE GOT A REAL TRAFFIC PROBLEM...
ONE OF THE INJURED'S IN A STATE OF CYANOSIS!
RRR...


WHAT ARE YOU?
SOME KIND OF SUPER-MAN?!
HE'S A ROBOT!!
A ROBOT?!
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! WE NEED TO EXAMINE HIM!
HE'S A ROBOT!
A REAL ROBOT!
IT'S NO USE... I CAN'T HELP THOSE PEOPLE...
GROAN
WHERE'S THAT BLASTED CRANE?
WE'VE RUN OUT OF HEART STIMULANT...
IT'S HOPELESS! THEY'LL ALL DIE UNLESS WE REMOVE THESE BEAMS!
.....
.....

I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

I'LL GO BACK TO THE CLINIC!

THIS ROBOT'S STILL AN EMPTY SHELL!

BUT IF I WEAR THE SHELL...

...MAYBE I CAN LIFT ...

...THOSE BEAMS...

CLANK

CLANK

NOBODY'LL GUESS IT'S ME!

SMASH

ACK!

I'M STUCK IN THE DOOR!!

CRAK

CAN'T DESTROY THE DOORWAY, SO IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO ON A DIET!

LOOKS A BIT CLUNKIER NOW...

YIKES!

CLANKETY

CLUNKETY

T-TH-THE ROBOT'S AN EMPTY S-SH... SHELL, BUT IT'S *MY ROBOT*, AND IT'S W... *WALKING!*

STOP! I NEED TO FIND OUT HOW YOU'RE WALKING!

CLUNKETY

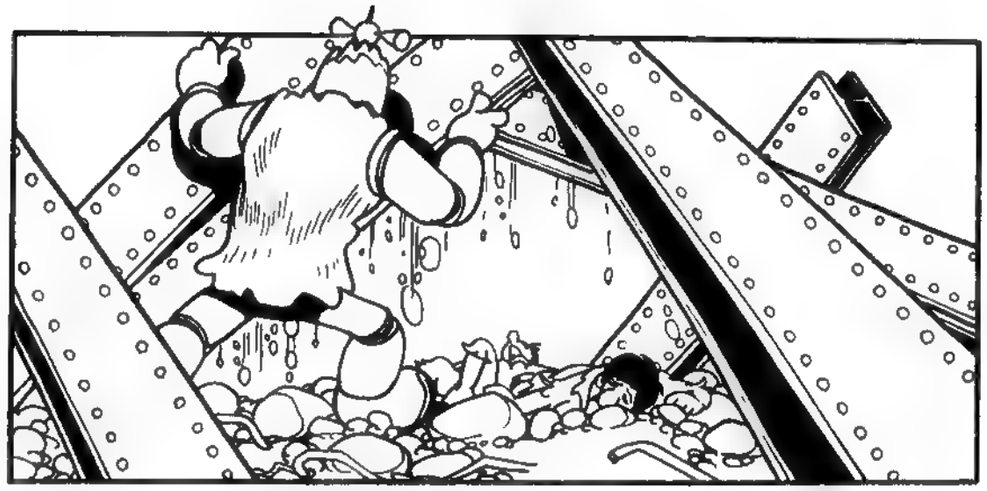
YOU SURE SOMEBODY'S NOT INSIDE, LIKE IN THOSE CHEAP MONSTER MOVIES?

CREEAAAK

HOLY COW! HE'S LIFTING UP THE BEAMS!

THAT'S NO MAN IN A MONSTER SUIT! THAT'S A *REAL* ROBOT!

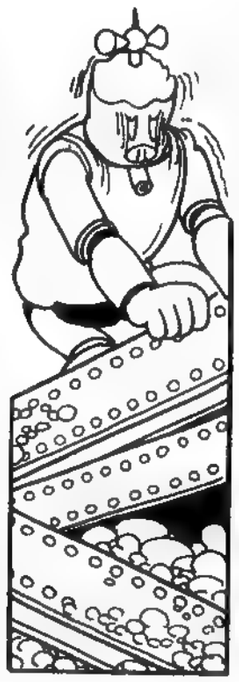
B-B-BUT THAT'S *IMPOSSIBLE*...

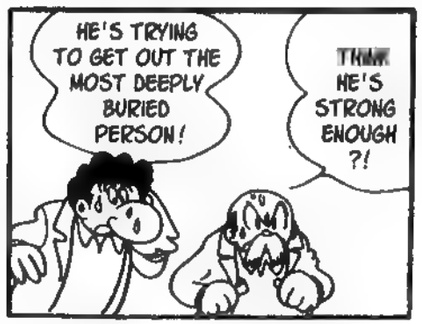


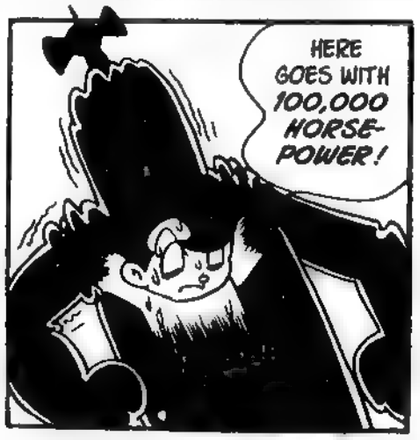

LOOKIT THE INJURED PEOPLE!
WE'VE GOTTA GET 'EM OUT NOW!
BRING A STRETCHER, QUICK!

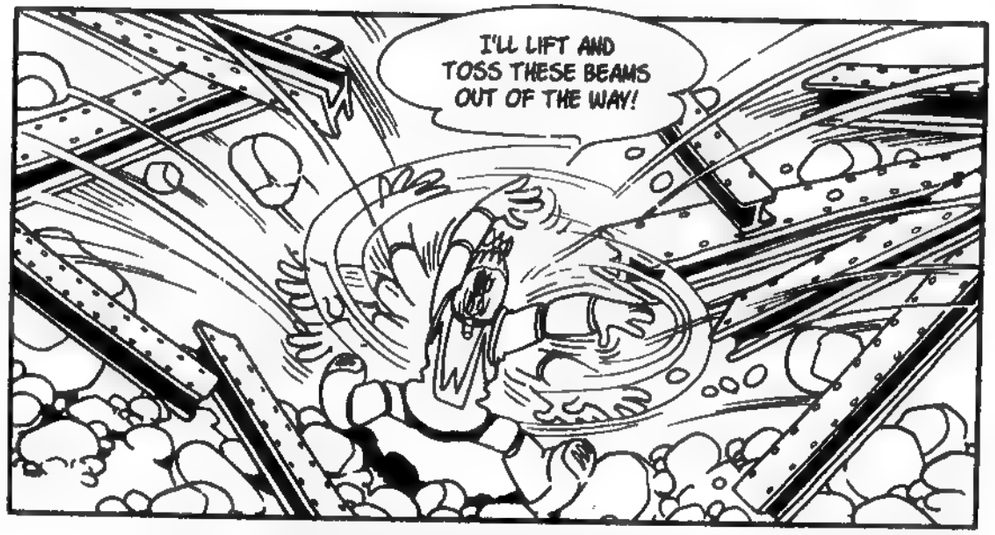

FOURTEEN, FIFTEEN...
WE'VE GOT ALMOST ALL OF 'EM OUT!
SAVED A CAT HERE, TOO!


GROAN
GROAN

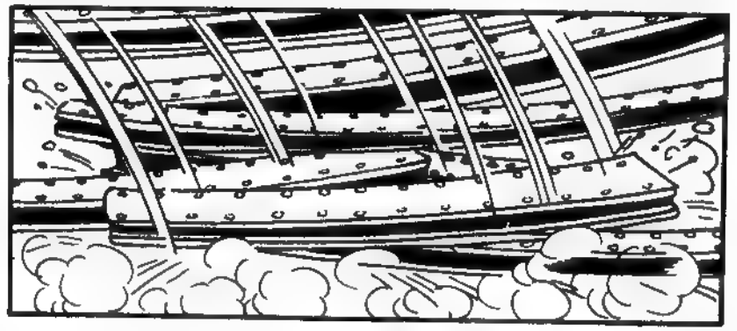



HE'S TRYING TO GET OUT THE MOST DEEPLY BURIED PERSON!
THMM HE'S STRONG ENOUGH ?!

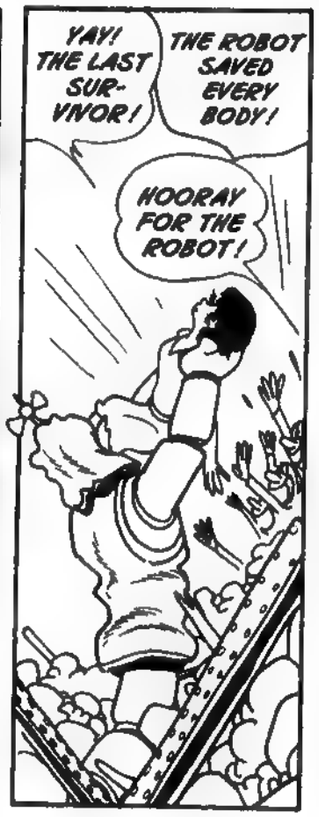

HERE GOES WITH 100,000 HORSE-POWER!


I'LL LIFT AND TOSS THESE BEAMS OUT OF THE WAY!


SO WHAT IF I ONLY HAVE A MONTH'S ENERGY LEFT...

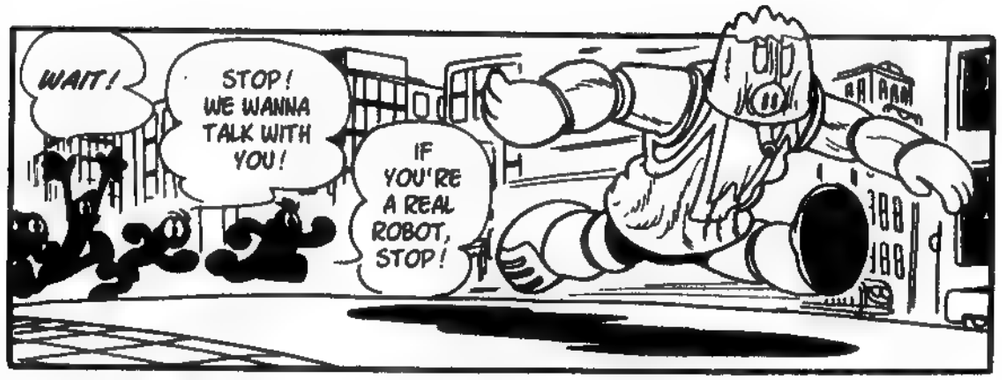



FINALLY, THE LAST PERSON!


YAY! THE LAST SUR-VIVOR!
THE ROBOT SAVED EVERY BODY!
HOORAY FOR THE ROBOT!

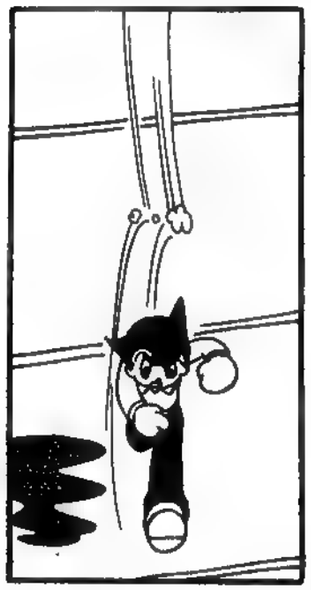

I BETTER GET OUT OF HERE, BEFORE THEY FIGURE OUT...

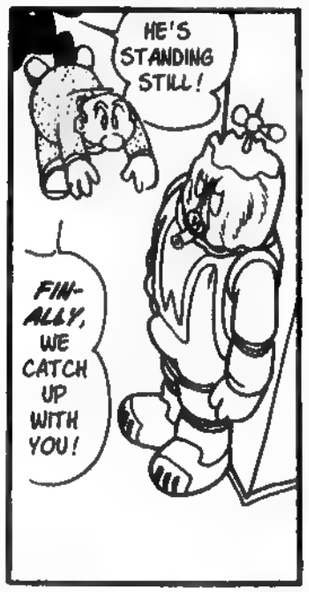

HEY! IT'S RUNNING AWAY!
WAIT! DON'T GO AWAY!


WAIT!
STOP! WE WANNA TALK WITH YOU!
IF YOU'RE A REAL ROBOT, STOP!


I'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS...



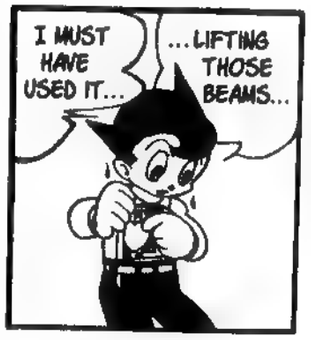


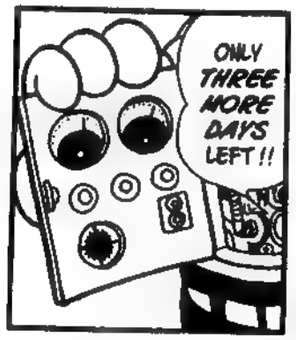

HE'S STANDING STILL!
FIN-ALLY, WE CATCH UP WITH YOU!


UH OH... THIS WOULD HAPPEN...
KABASH

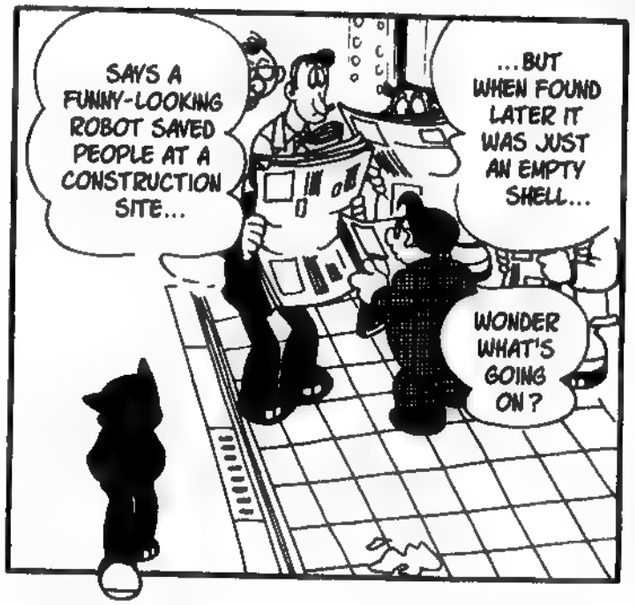

PHEW... WELL, I DID WHAT I COULD.
HOPE I DIDN'T BLOW MY IDENTITY...

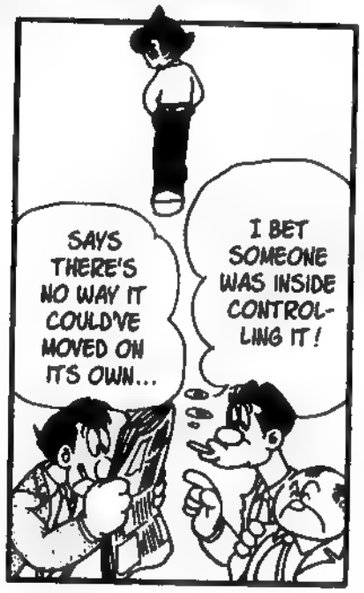

UH OH... MY ENERGY'S ALMOST GONE!


I MUST HAVE USED IT...
...LIFTING THOSE BEAMS...


ONLY THREE MORE DAYS LEFT!!

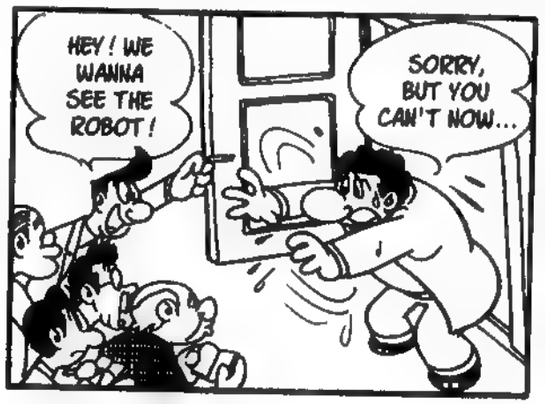

THREE DAYS ...
...THEN IT'S CURTAINS FOR ME...


SAYS A FUNNY-LOOKING ROBOT SAVED PEOPLE AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE...
...BUT WHEN FOUND LATER IT WAS JUST AN EMPTY SHELL...
WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON?


SAYS THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD'VE MOVED ON ITS OWN...
I BET SOMEONE WAS INSIDE CONTROL-LING IT!


BUT WHO COULDA BEEN NSIDE?
MAYBE GIANT BABA, THE FAMOUS PRO WRESTLER?




HEY! WE WANNA SEE THE ROBOT!
SORRY, BUT YOU CAN'T NOW...


THE PRIME MINISTER WANTS TO SEE YOUR ROBOT, SIR.
AND THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY WANTS TO BUY IT...

BAM

UH OH...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

SLAM

EVERYONE THINKS MY ROBOT SAVED THEM!

MY HOLLOW, EMPTY SHELL OF A ROBOT!

BUT I MADE HIM, AND EVEN I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY MOVE ON HIS OWN!

BUT HOW DID HE MOVE?

SOME-ONE MUST HAVE BEEN INSIDE!

BUT NO ORDINARY HUMAN COULD'VE RAISED THOSE BEAMS! THAT'D TAKE SOMEONE WITH *100,000 HORSEPOWER!*

WELL, WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?

KNOW WHAT *I* THINK?

A *REAL* ROBOT WAS INSIDE!

YOU THINK A REAL ROBOT *EXISTS?*

NO, BUT WHAT OTHER POSSIBILITY IS THERE?

COME OVER HERE, ASTRO...

COME HERE, AND *TAKE YOUR SHIRT OFF!*

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW ABOUT THE ROBOT SHELL IN THAT ROOM! *RIGHT?!*

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE A ROBOT...

.....

.....

YOU'RE NOT, ARE YOU?

SOMETHING SEEMED ODD ABOUT YOU FROM THE START...

YOUR BODY'S SOLID, LIKE A DOLL!

YIKES!

S-SO I WAS *RIGHT!*

W-WHERE'D YOU COME FROM... WH-WHO MADE YOU?!

IT'D TAKE A LONG TIME TO EXPLAIN...

BUT IT'S TIME FOR ME TO LEAVE...

I REVEALED A SECRET I SHOULDN'T HAVE...

...AND NOW YOU NEED TO FORGET ABOUT ME...

B...BUT WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?

WOW... YOU REALLY *WERE* A ROBOT!

FROM THE *FUTURE!*

HELLO? *HELLO?!*

THE ROBOT RAN AWAY!

THIS IS THE NEWSPAPER'S LOCAL NEWS SECTION...

WHAT? A ROBOT RAN AWAY? THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE!?

WHAT? YOU'RE THE MAN WHO INVENTED THE ROBOT THAT SAVED THOSE PEOPLE?

AND YOU SAY THE ROBOT SUDDENLY *ESCAPED?*

SPRONG

HE JUST SMASHED A HOLE IN THE CEILING AND FLEW AWAY!

IT'S AN *EMERGENCY!* WE'VE GOTTA CATCH HIM!

FLASH

UH OH!

I'VE BEEN SPOTTED!

I CAN'T LET THEM CATCH ME!!

SMALL FLYING OBJECT SPOTTED ABOVE SHIBUYA AREA! CONFIRMED TO BE THE ESCAPED ROBOT! SURROUND IT AND FORCE IT DOWN!

FWAP FWAP FWAP FWAP

THEY'RE COMING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS!

CHECK THIS OUT, JOE! SOMETHIN' BIG'S GOING ON!

HOPE THEY'RE NOT AFTER US, JACK...

SOMEONE'S COMING!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A COP...

GOOD EVE-NING...

IT'S A KID!!

?

?

YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME...

I NEED TO HIDE FOR A BIT...

HIDE?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

I'M BEING PURSUED...

WHY? WHAT'D YOU DO?

YOU MEAN THOSE COPS AND HELICOP-TERS ARE ALL AFTER *YOU*?

YOU MUST'VE DONE SOMETHIN' *AWFUL* BAD, KID...

HE DOESN'T LOOK WELL, JACK...

I'M GOING TO DIE SOON...

YOU'RE *WHAT*?!

I'VE ONLY GOT *THREE DAYS* LEFT...

YOU SICK, HURT, OR WHAT?

?

YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE PAPERS OR TV?

JOE.. C'MERE A MINUTE...

SAYS A *ROBOT* ESCAPED FROM OCHANOMIZU'S LAB AT THE THRILL CLINIC, AND IT'S BUILT LIKE A *HUMAN BOY*...

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...

CHECK THIS OUT...

WHAT IS IT?

YOU MEAN THAT KID'S A *ROBOT*?

YOU MUST BE KID-DING!

LOOKS LIKE AN ORDINARY KID TO ME...

B... BUT HE JUST OPENED HIS STOM--!!

H-H-H-H

WOW... HE *IS* A ROBOT!

THIS IS GETTING INTEREST-ING...

WHADDAYA MEAN, JOE?

NO NEED TO BE SCARED JUST 'CUZ HE'S A ROBOT, PAL...

BUT ROBOTS CAN SMASH AND KILL PEOPLE, RIGHT?

AND THAT'LL COME IN HANDY!

WITH A REAL ROBOT, WE COULD MAKE A FORTUNE!

WE'VE GOTTA GET HIM TO TRUST US, AND HELP US! LEAVE IT TO ME!

FWAP

WE READ THE PAPERS, KID...

.....
.....
.....

POOR KID, SO YER A *ROBOT*! SO WHY'S EVERYONE AFTER YOU, EH?

NOW, YOU SAID YER GONNA DIE SOON...

I'M RUNNING OUT OF LIQUID ENERGY ...

IF *THAT'S* ALL IT TAKES, MAYBE WE CAN HELP...

BUT I DON'T TRUST YOU!

YOU *WHAT* P!

MY HEART TELLS ME IF PEOPLE ARE GOOD OR BAD!

AND I'M GETTING A RED LIGHT FOR YOU BOTH!

SOUNDS LIKE TRAFFIC LIGHTS OR SOMETHIN'...

YEAH... WHAT MAKES YOU THINK WE'RE BAD?

THAT'S NO WAY TA TALK...

WE'RE HERE TA *HELP*, KID...

BUT YOU CAN'T HELP ME...

HERE, TAKE A LOOK AT THESE DRAWINGS...

THIS IS A DESIGN FOR NEW MODEL ENRICHED URANIUM INJECTOR!

YOU'RE A SMART KID...

BUT WHO COULD'VE INVENTED THIS?!

YER LOOKIN' AT HIM...

ARE YOU A SCIEN-TIST?

YUP. AND A TOP ENGINEER TO BOOT.

IT'S LIKE THIS, KID. WE MADE THIS INVENTION, BUT SOME SPIES ARE AFTER US 'N WE'RE AFRAID TO GO OUTSIDE...

HEY! DON'T LOOK AT US LIKE THAT!

IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE US, YER ON YOUR OWN, KIDDO.

...AND WE WON'T GIVE YOU ANY NEW ENERGY... GET IT?

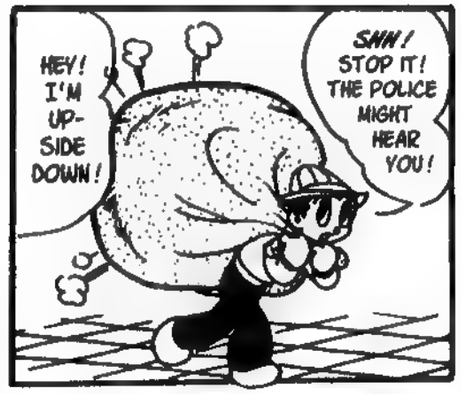
W... WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

TAKE US TO THE HARBOR WITHOUT ANYONE SEEING US...

OUCH! OWW! WATCH THE ELBOW!

CUT THE FIDGETING, JACK! STAY STILL!

BE QUIET! THE POLICE'VE CORDONED OFF THE AREA!

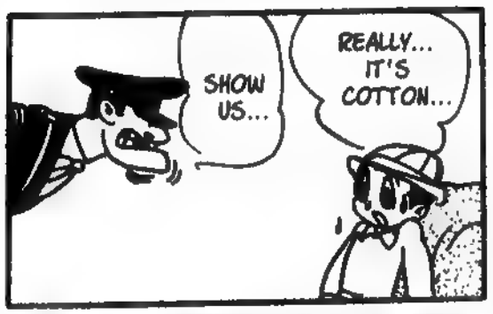

HEY! I'M UP-SIDE DOWN!
SHH! STOP IT! THE POLICE MIGHT HEAR YOU!

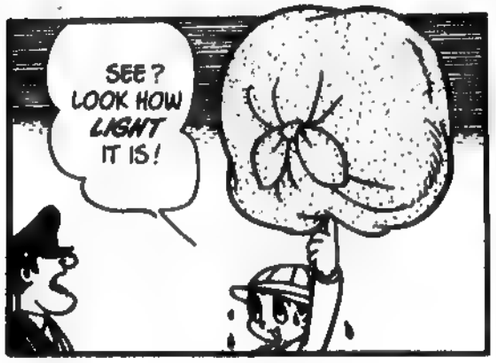

HALT!

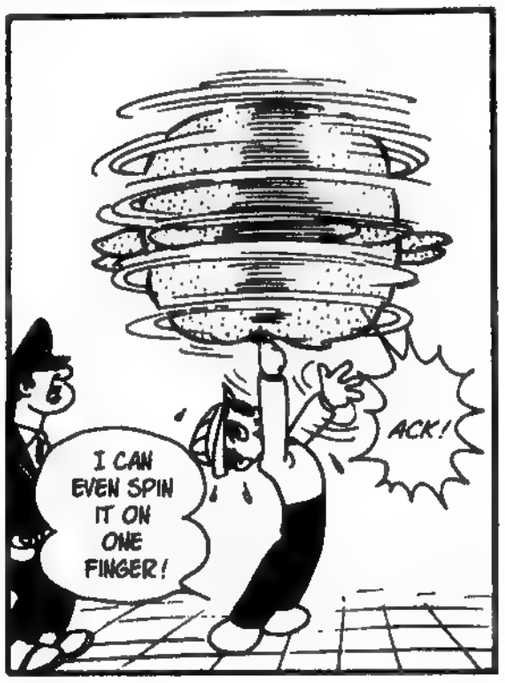

WHAT'S IN THE BAG, SONNY!?
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!

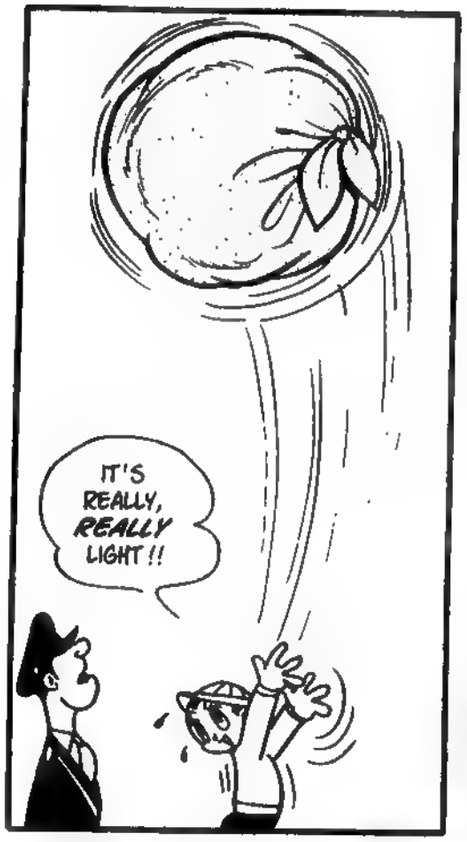

PUT THAT BAG DOWN AND SHOW US WHAT'S INSIDE!
PSST... TELL 'IM IT'S COTTON...


UM... IT'S JUST COTTON...
COTTON? HMPH. LOOKS AWFULLY HEAVY FOR THAT...

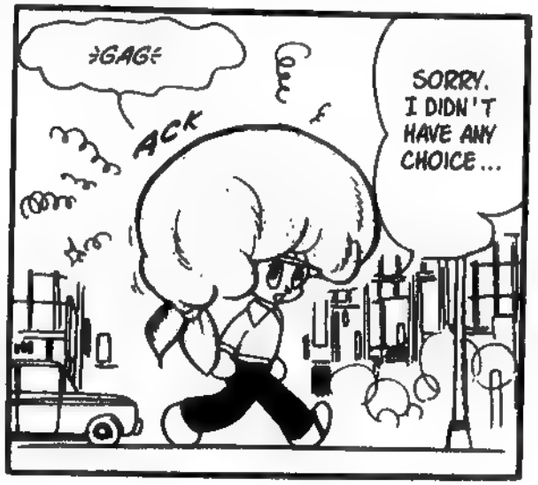

SHOW US...
REALLY... IT'S COTTON...


SEE? LOOK HOW LIGHT IT IS!

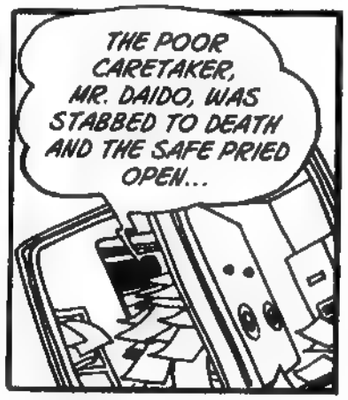

I CAN EVEN SPIN IT ON ONE FINGER!
ACK!

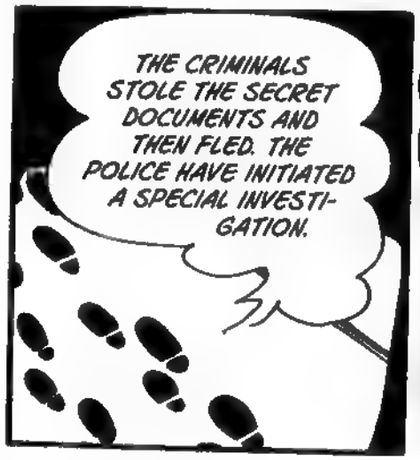

IT'S REALLY, REALLY LIGHT!!

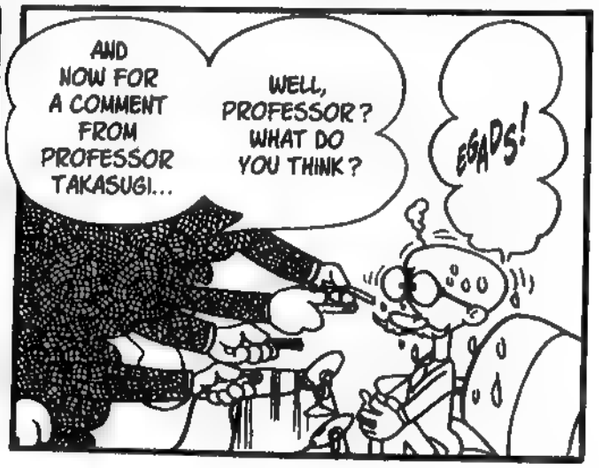

WELL, GUESS THAT PROVES IT... LET HIM GO...
OFF YA GO, KID!


AGAGE
ACK
SORRY. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE...

THIRTY MINUTES AGO CRIMINALS APPARENTLY RANSACKED THE SAFEROOM AT THE TAKASUGI ELECTRONICS LABORATORY, ON THE 20TH FLOOR OF BUILDING X....


THE POOR CARETAKER, MR. DAIDO, WAS STABBED TO DEATH AND THE SAFE PRIED OPEN...


THE CRIMINALS STOLE THE SECRET DOCUMENTS AND THEN FLED. THE POLICE HAVE INITIATED A SPECIAL INVESTI-GATION.

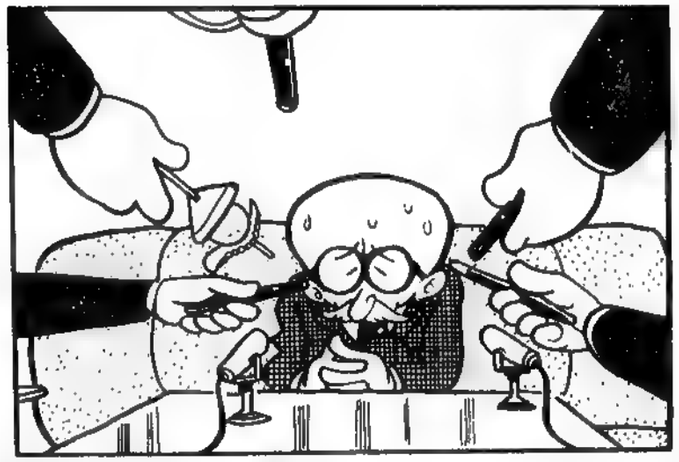

AND NOW FOR A COMMENT FROM PROFESSOR TAKASUGI...
WELL, PROFESSOR? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
EGADS!

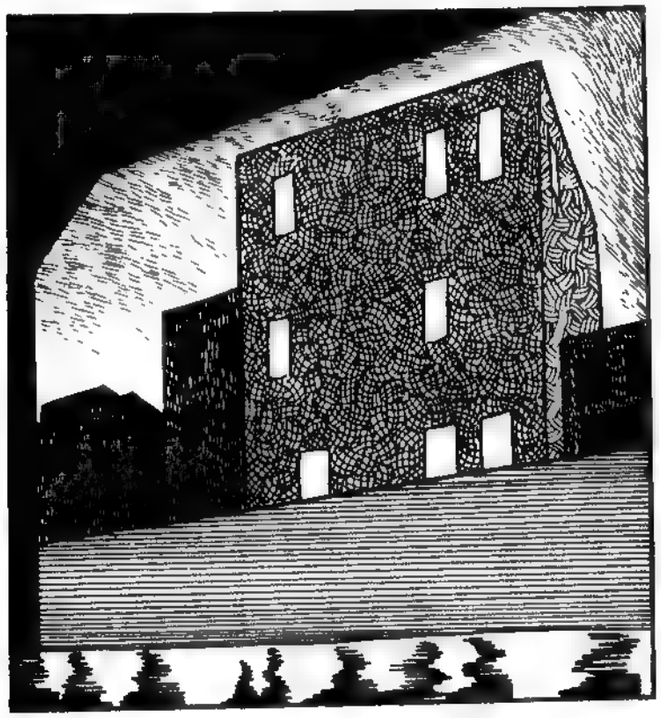
THE CRUSH OF REPORTERS BEGAN QUESTIONING THE POOR SCIENTIST.

"AND WHAT WERE THE SECRET DOCUMENTS, PROFESSOR?"

"*UM, ER*, THEY WERE PLANS FOR A SPECIAL ENERGY TUBE THAT WE DEVELOPED..."

"AN ENERGY TUBE?"





"WELL, SIMPLY PUT, IT'S, *EM*, A DEVICE USED TO INJECT ENERGY INTO ATOMIC POWERED ENGINES. IF ATOMIC POWERED CARS ARE EVER DEVELOPED, FOR EXAMPLE, IT'D BE AN IDEAL WAY TO REFUEL THEM."

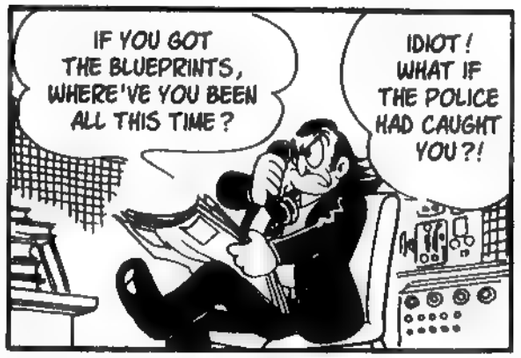
"SO IT COULD ALSO BE USED FOR ATOMIC SUBMARINES AND MILITARY WEAPONS, RIGHT?"

"IT CERTAINLY COULD, WHICH IS WHY WE WANTED TO KEEP IT SECRET UNTIL THE TIME CAME WHEN IT COULD ONLY BE USED FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. NOW THAT IT'S BEEN STOLEN, THERE IS A REAL DANGER THAT IT MIGHT BE USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES..."

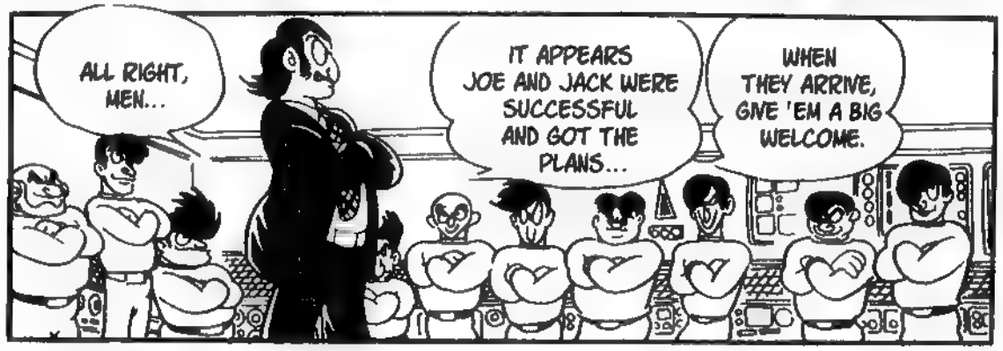
MEANWHILE, IN A RUN-DOWN BUILDING BY THE HARBOR, IN THE SHINAGAWA AREA OF TOKYO...

"WHERE ARE YOU JOE? I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOUR CONTACT! WE WERE AFRAID YOU'D BEEN CAUGHT!!"

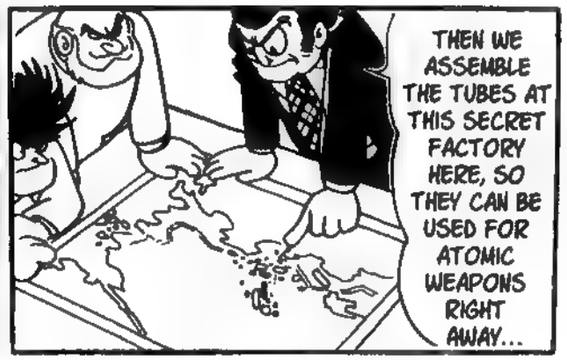


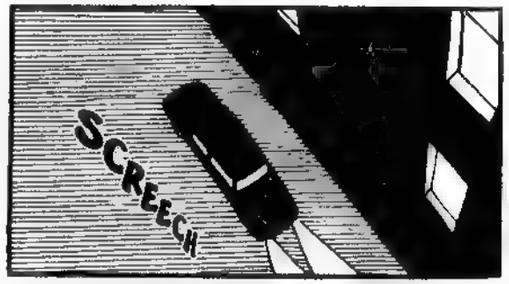




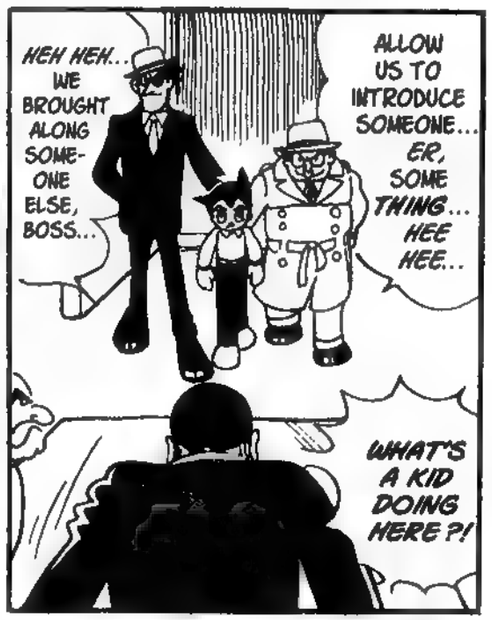












HE'S A ROBOT? CUT THE JOKES, PAL...

ONE PEEK AT HIS CHEST ...

...AND YOU'LL UNDER-STAND...

ONLY I OPEN IT!!

GASp

OH... I SEE...

PSST... HE'S RUNNING OUT OF ENERGY, BOSS... THAT'S WHY HE WANTS THE ENERGY INJECTOR...

SO WE'VE GOT HIM OVER A BARREL, EH?

Shhh. He'll overhear anything we say, so put it in writing

Does he know we're industrial spies?

Yeah, but he can't do anything about it

...because if he does, he'll use up his energy...

WHAT A FIND! I COULD TAKE HIM TO SAIGON 'N SELL HIM FOR A FORTUNE...

...WITH THE BLUE-PRINTS!

IT'S ASTRO, RIGHT? WADDYA SAY WE GO TO SAIGON TOGETHER?

SAIGON? YOU MEAN VIETNAM?

YEAH. FOR A ROBOT, YOU'RE PRETTY SMART, AREN'T YOU?

WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO BUILD THE ENERGY INJECTOR UNLESS WE GO THERE... WHADDYA SAY?

'GUESS I'VE NO CHOICE...

GOOD! INTO THIS SUITCASE YOU GO, THEN...

I KNOW IT'S A LITTLE TIGHT...

BUT WE CAN'T HAVE ANYONE SPOTTING YOU. YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY IN THERE TIL WE GET TO SAIGON...

UM, CAN I HAVE A PENCIL AND PAPER?

DUNNO WHY, BUT SURE...

MIGHT BE HARD TO BREATHE, BUT BE PATIENT...

ROBOTS DON'T BREATHE, STUPID...

To anyone who finds this doll:
Please send it to
Shingo Yamanaka,
in South Ikebukuro,
Toyoshima Ward,
Tokyo, Japan.

FEELS LIKE WE'RE MOVING...

GUESS I'M REALLY GOING TO VIETNAM...

RATTLE

SLAM

ROAR

WONDER HOW THEY PLAN TO GET TO SAIGON?

THEY'VE EITHER GOT TO TAKE A SHIP OR A PLANE...

I CAN TELL WE'RE IN A CAR, HEADED WEST...

SCREECH

?

HECK NO!

NEVER!

WE PRO-TEST!

ONE... TWO... GO HOME!

THREE... FOUR... ATOMIC SUBS!

WE WON'T TAKE... GO HOME!

...ANY MORE!!

ATOMIC SUBS GO HOME!

PEACE NOW!

OUT OF THE WAY, IDIOTS!

WE'RE HEADED FOR THE PIER!

ATOMIC POWERED SUB-MARINES?

NEVER! HECK NO!

LET 'EM HAVE IT!
TAKE THIS!
'N THAT!
ROAR
THUD
I WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENING?
YOU'VE GOTTA BACK UP!
BUT WE NEED TO GO TO THE PIER...
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
TURN AROUND! NOW!
YOU CAN'T GET THROUGH!
BUT WE'VE GOT TO, PAL...
HEY! STOP!!
VROOM
OUT OF THE WAY!
VROOM VROOM
HEY! IT'S SOME FOREIGNERS!
MUST BE TOURISTS OR REPORTERS!
WHAT A LOT OF NERVE! GET 'EM!!

OUT OF THE WAY, COLLEGE BOYS!
WHAT'S THE FOREIGNER MUTTERING ABOUT?!
GET HIM!
FWP
FWISH
UH OH!!
WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING...
WE'RE ALMOST TO THE ATOMIC SUB, BOSS...
YIKES! THEY'RE POURING GASOLINE ON US!
WE'RE ON FIRE!!
VOOSH
WE'RE BURNING!
HAALP
WHA? THE CAR'S FLYING!

SAVE US, ASTRO!

THE CAR'S ON FIRE, AND THE BLUEPRINTS'LL BURN!! DO SOMETHING!

VOOSH

KASPLOOSH

HOLY SMOKE...

SAVED! NOW TAKE US OUT TO SEA, ASTRO...

OUT TO SEA?

YEAH... AN ATOMIC SUB'S WAITING FOR US...

A SUBMARINE? IS THAT HOW YOU'RE GOING TO VIETNAM?

JUST SHUT UP AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, ASTRO...

...OR ELSE WE WON'T GIVE YOU ANY MORE ENERGY...

SO THE SUB'S WHAT THAT DEMONSTRATION WAS ALL ABOUT...

ALL THAT FUSS, AND IT'S FLOATING OUT HERE LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED...

THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMS LIKE IT'S GOING CRAZY...

THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR MY ELECTRO-BRAIN...

OKAY, PUT US DOWN ON TOP OF THE SUB.

QUICK, HIDE IN THE SUIT-CASE AGAIN!

...AND STAY QUIET!

SLAM

HEY, YOU!

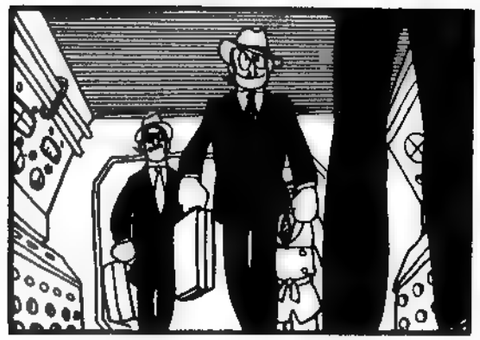
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

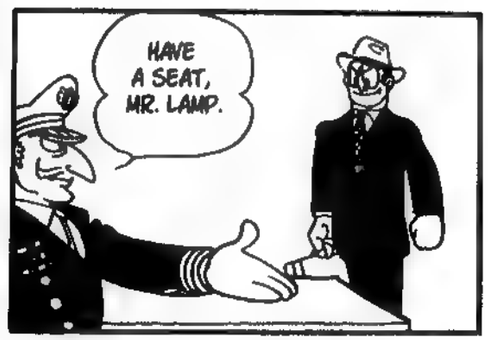
HOW'D YOU GET HERE IN THAT CAR?

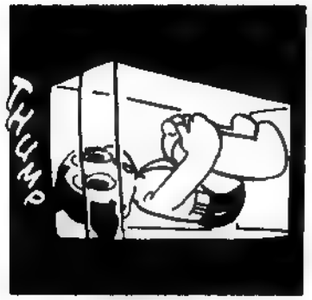
NEVER MIND, JUST TELL THE CAPTAIN I'VE GOT THE BLUEPRINTS!

CAP'N... MR. LAMP'S BROUGHT THE SECRET BLUEPRINTS...

GOOD. BRING HIM TO MY CABIN...

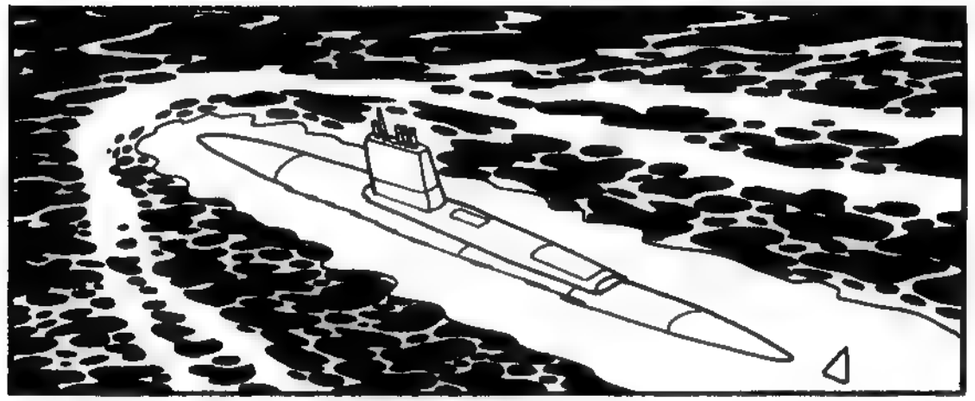




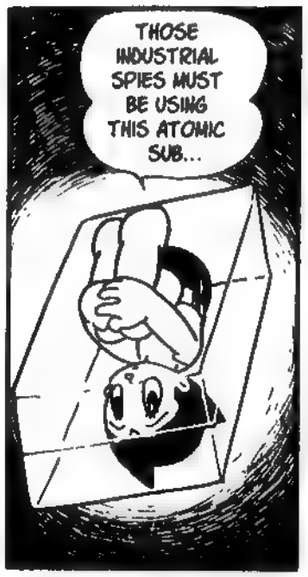




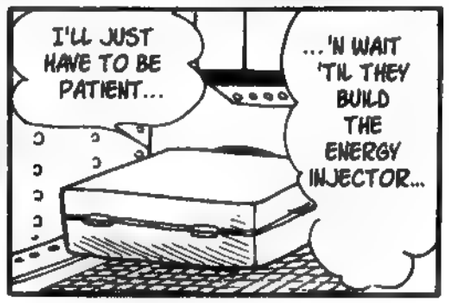




THE SUITCASE, WITH ASTRO IN IT, WAS STORED IN A CORNER OF THE SUB'S HOLD, AND A LONG VOYAGE THEN BEGAN. ALL ASTRO COULD HEAR WAS THE SOUND OF THE ENGINES...

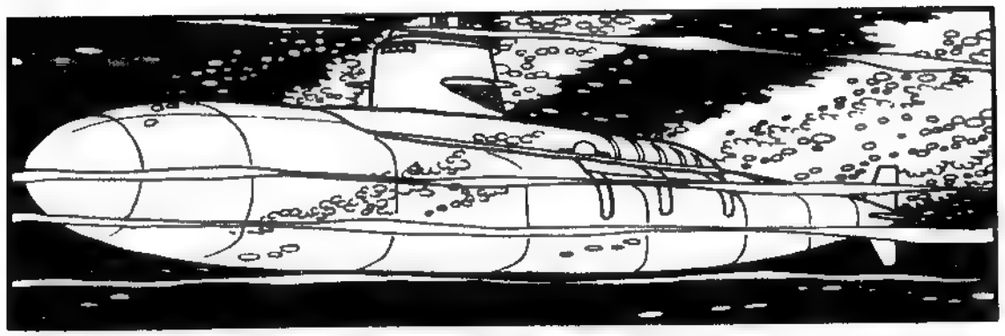


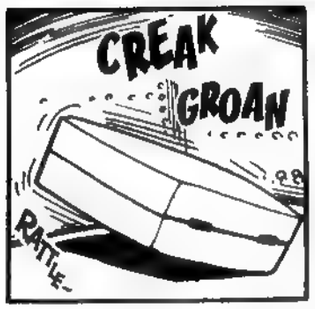


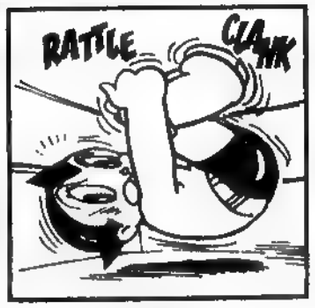




THE ANGEL OF VIETNAM

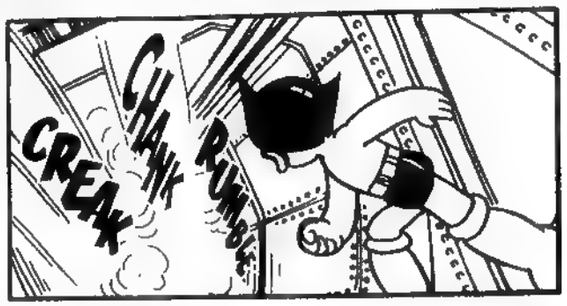



CREAK
GROAN
RATTLE-

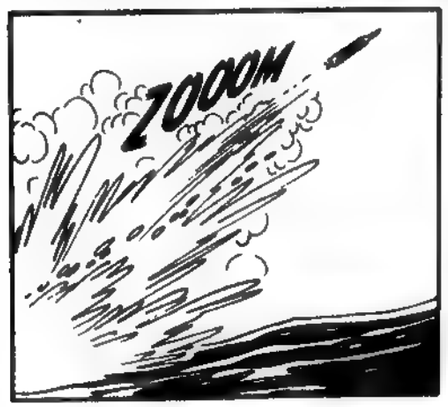

RATTLE
CLANK

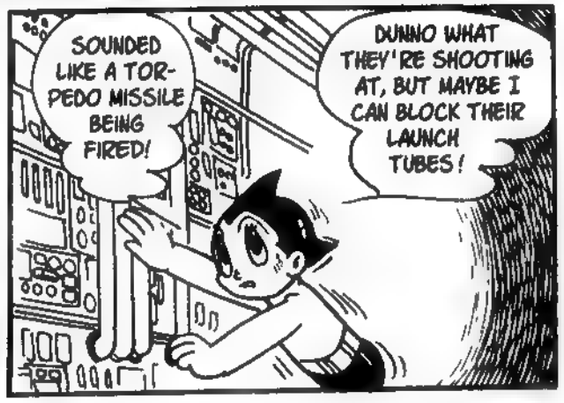

SOME-
THING'S
HAPPEN-
ING!
CREAK

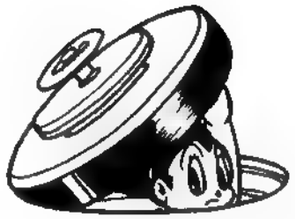

SOUNDS
LIKE FIGHT-
ING! I'VE
GOTTA DO
SOMETHING!

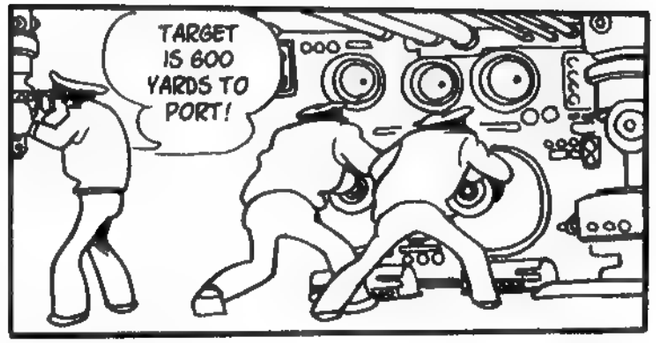

CREAK
CHANK
RUMBLE


BOMPH
VOOOSH

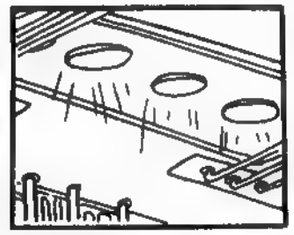

ZOOOM

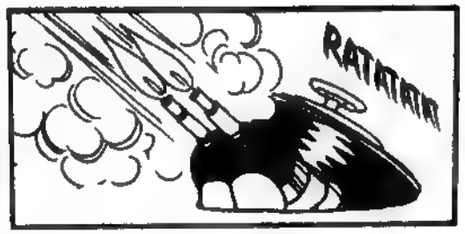

SOUNDED
LIKE A TOR-
PEDO MISSILE
BEING
FIRED!
DUNNO WHAT
THEY'RE SHOOTING
AT, BUT MAYBE I
CAN BLOCK THEIR
LAUNCH
TUBES!



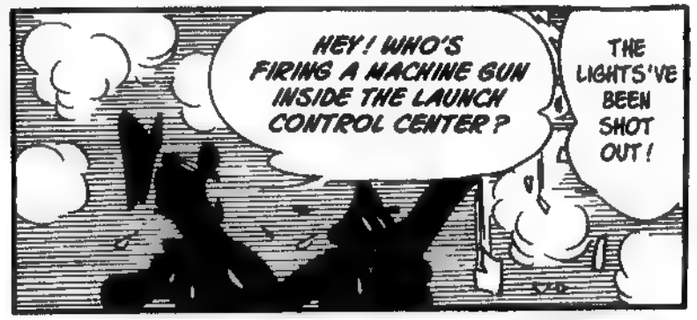

TARGET
IS 600
YARDS TO
PORT!





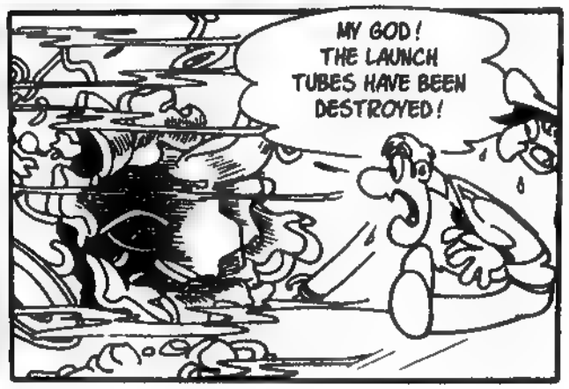

RATATATA


SMASH


HEY! WHO'S
FIRING A MACHINE GUN
INSIDE THE LAUNCH
CONTROL CENTER?
THE
LIGHTS'VE
BEEN
SHOT
OUT!


IT'S
PITCH BLACK!
TURN ON
EMERGENCY
LAMPS!
WHO DID
THIS?! HE
MUST BE
IN THIS
ROOM!
UH OH...
SOMETHING
TOOK OFF...


SMASH


MY GOD!
THE LAUNCH
TUBES HAVE BEEN
DESTROYED!

WHAT'S GOING ON?! WHY'D WE STOP THE ATTACK?!

SOMETHING SMASHED OUR TORPEDO TUBES, SIR!

WHAT?!

ALL RIGHT, WHO DID THIS?! WHERE IS HE?

MUST BE A *SPY* IN OUR MIDST!

SLAM TRAMP BOMP TRAMP

TRAMP TRAMP

UH OH ...!

YOU CRAZY ROBOT!!

I *KNOW* YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DID IT!

I DID...

...AND NOW THEY'LL ALL SUSPECT US!

THE CAP'N THINKS A SPY DID THIS!

SO THEY'LL SEARCH THE WHOLE SHIP!

WHAT HAPPENS IF THEY FIND OUT *YOU* DID IT?

YOU OUT-OF-CONTROL ROBOT!

WHY'D YOU HAVE TO SMASH THE TUBES?

LOOK AT THE *MESS* YOU'VE CREATED!

BUT I HATE WAR, SO I WANTED THEM TO STOP!

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE, TIN BOY!

YOWCH!

OOPS...

ER, HI, CAP'N... THIS IS THE AMAZING ROBOT I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT...

YOU MEAN *HE'S* THE ONE WHO CAUSED THIS MESS...

RIGHT?

ER, EASY, SIR...

YOU TRYING TO DOUBLE-CROSS ME, *MISTER* LAMP ?!

NO, SIR! NEVER!

I COULD HAVE YOU PUT BEFORE A *FIRING SQUAD* FOR THIS...

YOU SAID THE ROBOT WAS LIKE A GOOD SLAVE, AND IT'D MAKE A GREAT WEAPON FOR US!

WHAT?!

B... BUT...

BUT THIS *SAFE* SLAVE SMASHED OUR TORPEDO TUBES! WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT *THAT?!* EH?!

AND AS FOR YOU, ROBOT, ANSWER ME IF YOU CAN!

YOU WERE SOLD TO THE U.S. NAVY AS A NEW SECRET WEAPON! DID YOU KNOW THAT?

W... WHAT?!

ME?! S-SOLD AS A *SECRET WEAPON* ?

WHEN, LAMP?! *WHEN?!*

SHAD-DUP!

NO ONE SELLS ME! I'M *FREE!!*

ENOUGH, YOU STUPID ROBOT!

LET ME EXPLAIN, KID. I SOLD YOU ALONG WITH THOSE BLUEPRINTS!

WHY, YOU...YOU *LIAR!!*

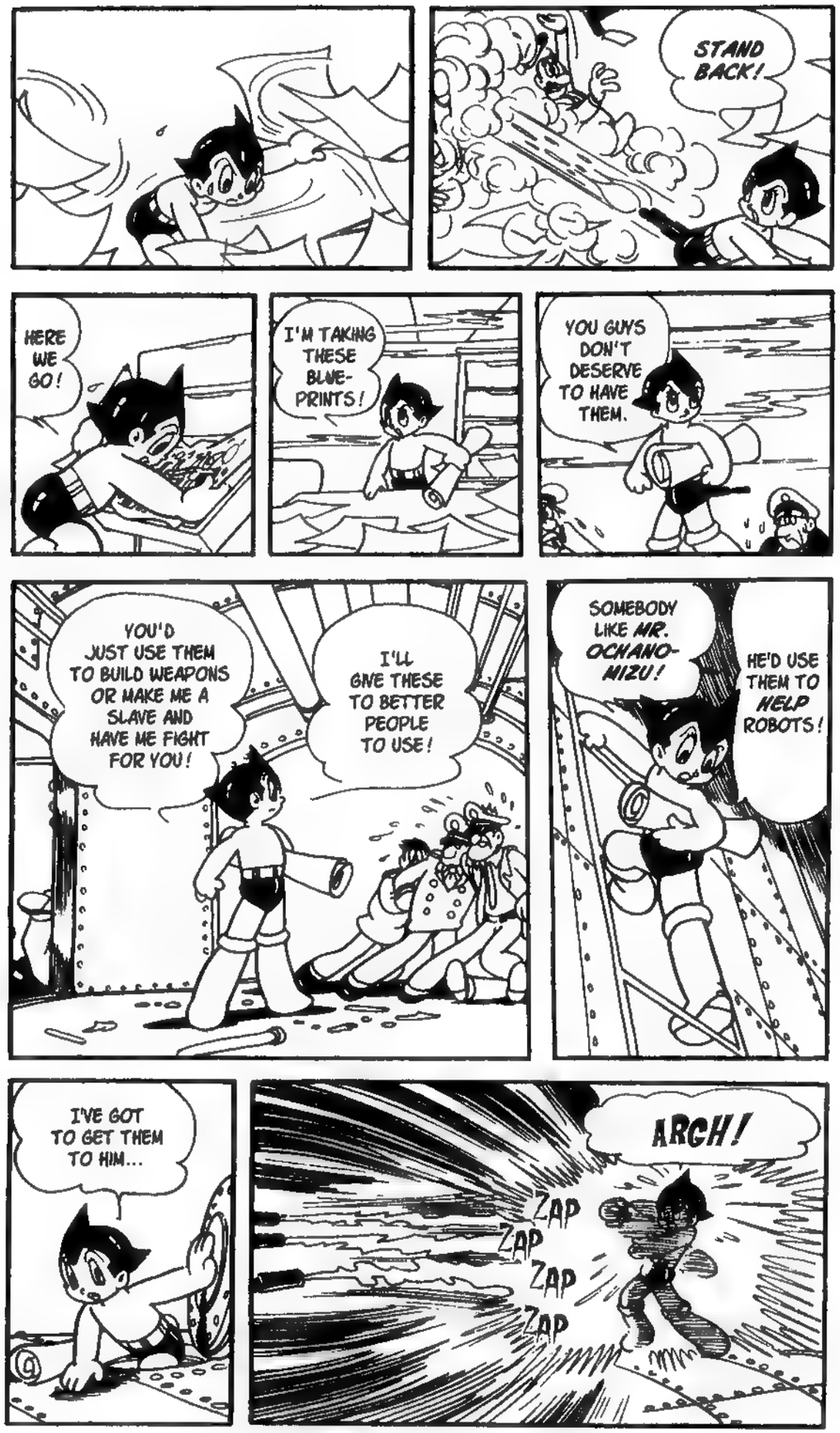
HAH HAH! JUST TRY 'N GET ANGRY! YOU'RE ALMOST OUT OF ENERGY!

'N IF YOU WANT MORE, YOU'VE GOTTA BE SOLD! THAT'S WHAT ROBOTS ARE DESIGNED FOR! THEY'RE *SLAVES !!*

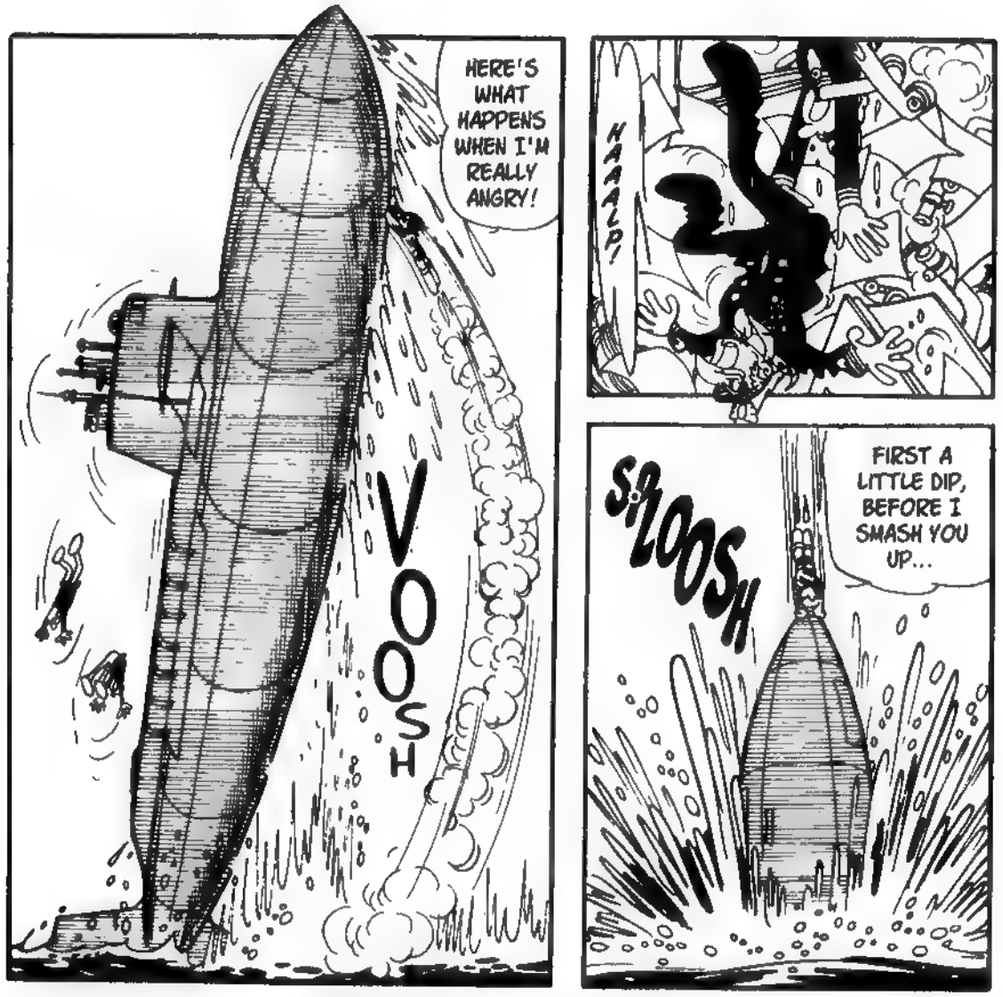
YOU'RE EVIL, LAMP...

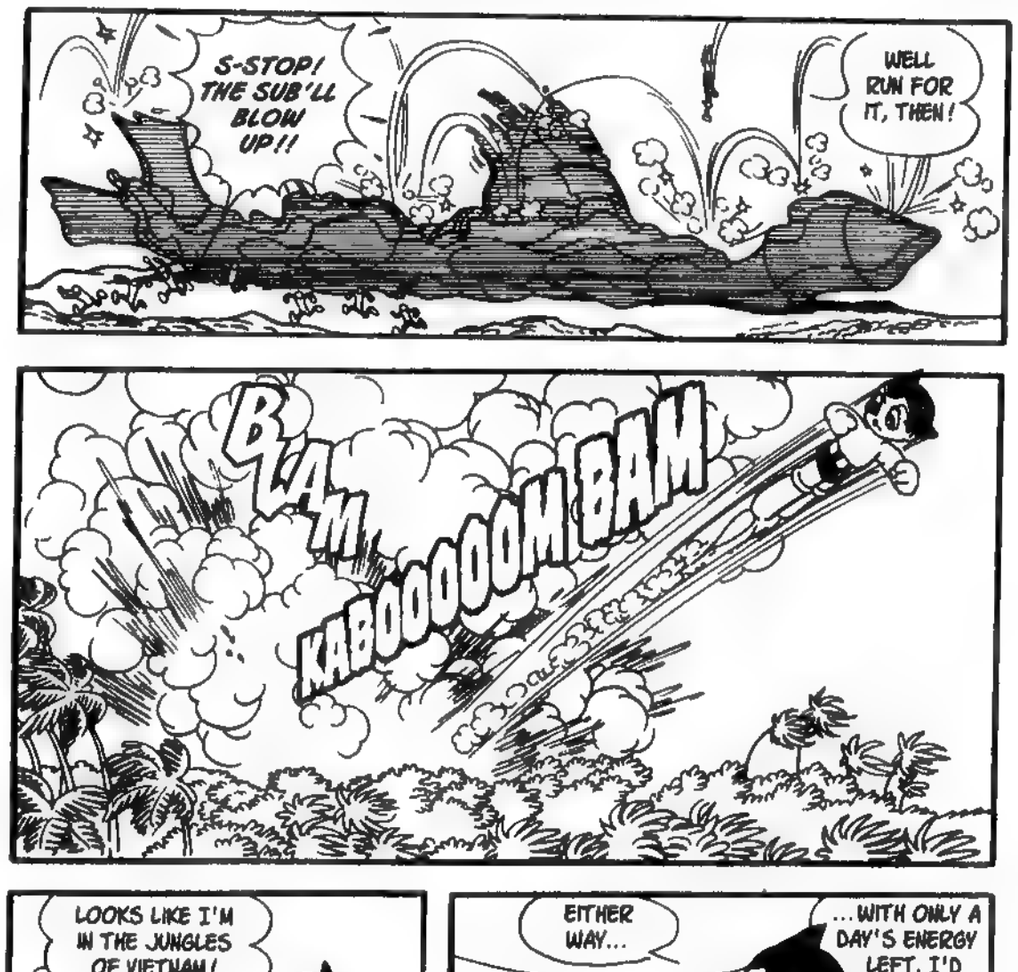
SLAM

DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! STOP HIM!


STAND BACK!
HERE WE GO!
I'M TAKING THESE BLUE-PRINTS!
YOU GUYS DON'T DESERVE TO HAVE THEM.
YOU'D JUST USE THEM TO BUILD WEAPONS OR MAKE ME A SLAVE AND HAVE ME FIGHT FOR YOU!
I'LL GIVE THESE TO BETTER PEOPLE TO USE!
SOMEBODY LIKE MR. OCHANOMIZU!
HE'D USE THEM TO HELP ROBOTS!
I'VE GOT TO GET THEM TO HIM...
ZAP ZAP ZAP ZAP
ARGH!


NO!!
THEY FRIED THE BLUE-PRINTS!
THE BLUEPRINTS FOR MY ENERGY TUBE...
...HAVE TURNED INTO ASHES!!
I'M FINISH-ED!!
JUST FOR THAT ...
...AND I'LL SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO!
...I'LL USE THE LAST OF MY ENERGY...


HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I'M REALLY ANGRY!
VOOSH
HAALP!
FIRST A LITTLE DIP, BEFORE I SMASH YOU UP...
SPLOOSH
CAP'N! HAALP!
DO SOMETHING! ANYTHING!
TIME FOR A TRIP TO LAND!
TAKE THIS! 'N THIS! 'N THIS!
BASH
SMASH
BASH


S-STOP! THE SUB'LL BLOW UP!!
WELL RUN FOR IT, THEN!
BLAM
KABOOOOOM
BAM
LOOKS LIKE I'M IN THE JUNGLES OF VIETNAM!
EITHER WAY...
...WITH ONLY A DAY'S ENERGY LEFT, I'D NEVER MAKE IT BACK TO JAPAN ...
VROOOM
A JET FIGHTER!
BUDABUDABUDA
ZIP ZIP ZIP
IT'S STRAFING THAT VILLAGE!
FWP
FWP
FWP
FWP

SCREEE

DADADADADADADA

ROAR

EVERY-BODY'S BEEN KILLED!

WAAAH! WAAAH! MAMA!

THIS POOR MOTHER DIED PROTECTING HER BABY!

EVEN LITTLE CHILDREN ARE KILLED! I WONDER IF THIS IS A VIET CONG VILLAGE...

WE'RE NOT VIET CONG, SON, JUST PEASANTS ...

WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG ...

THESE DAYS THEY JUST SHOOT ANY-THING THAT MOVES...

BUT WHO ARE *YOU*, AND WHERE ARE *YOU* FROM?

I AM FROM A WORLD WITHOUT WAR...

"WORLD WITH-OUT WAR?" WHOEVER HEARD OF THAT?

WELL, WE DO HAVE BATTLES WITH ALIENS SOMETIMES, I GUESS...

I WOULDN'T STICK AROUND HERE, SON. THIS VILLAGE MAY BE DESTROYED TOMORROW...

WELL, I MIGHT DIE TOMORROW ANYWAY...

SO I'LL STAY HERE WITH YOU UNTIL THE END...

I'LL PRO-TECT YOU !!

BUT THAT'S CRAZY!

YEAH. THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN PROTECT US ALONE...

NOT NECES-SARILY.

I WAS MADE TO PROTECT PEOPLE.

ANOTHER BOMBING RAID!!

BABOOM

WHOOSH

VOOSH

KABOOOM

RUN FOR IT, OR ANOTHER HUND-RED OF US'LL BE KILLED!

KABOOM
BUDABUDABUDA
OKAY, WHERE ARE THE BOMBS!?
BOOM
BAM
OKAY, I'LL TAKE YOU ON 'N TOSS YOU BACK!
SCREEE
HERE WE GO...
WOOSH
GOT-CHA!
TIME TO CHANGE DIREC-TION!
THERE! GO HIT YOUR PAL!
WOOSH
SCREEE
KABOOM

WOOOSH
COTCHA!
NEVER LEARN, DO YOU?!
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
TAKE THAT!
KABOOM
BABA BOOM
ONLY FOUR HOURS LEFT!
UH OH...
NEXT IT'S A TANK ATTACK!
THEY'RE DETERMINED TO DESTROY THAT VILLAGE!

RUMBLE
CLANK
RUMBLE
CLANK
CLANK
BOING
BAM
BAM
SNAP
BOOM
BLAM
BAM BAM
TWEAKING YOUR NOSES ISN'T ENOUGH, I GUESS!
CRUNCH
...SO HOW 'BOUT A TANK HIGH-RISE!
IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH ...
...TAKE THIS! THE VERTICAL ROBO-CHOP!

...ONLY TWO HOURS LEFT!
WELL, THAT TAKES CARE OF THE BOMBING FOR NOW... BUT WHAT HAPPENED?!
A WOMAN'S GIVING BIRTH...
WHAT?!
THE BABY'S DUE IN TWO HOURS...
I PRAY WE'RE NOT BOMBED AGAIN BEFORE THEN, BUT I'M AFRAID!
TWO HOURS?

HANG IN THERE, MRS. VO!

THE ATTACKS ARE OVER, SO TRY TO RELAX!

NEXT WE CAN EXPECT THE *CLEANSER BOMBING* TO START...

"CLEANSER" BOMBING?

"YUP. IT'S EVEN WORSE THAN CARPET BOMBING..."

"IT'S A SCORCHED EARTH BOMBING THAT ERASES EVERYTHING FROM THE GROUND..."

"IT'S WHY THE GROUND LOOKS LIKE IT'S HAD A BUZZ CUT, WITH GREENERY ONLY LEFT HERE..."

"IF THEY DROP IT HERE, THE VILLAGE IS FINISHED..."

I DON'T HEAR ANY PLANES, THOUGH...

SOUNDS LIKE WE'RE OKAY FOR NOW...

SHE'S GOING INTO LABOR!

THE BABY'S BEING BORN!

UH OH... I HEAR A ROAR...

HERE SHE COMES! GIVE ME A HAND!

QUICK! GET SOME HOT WATER!

ROAAR

LOOK AT THAT HUGE FORMATION!

THE BOMBERS ARE COMING! WE'RE FINISHED!

I'VE GOTTA TRY 'N STOP 'EM!

ROAR

HEY! HOW CAN YOU *FLY* LIKE THAT?! WHO ARE YOU?

I'M YOUR *FRIEND*, FOR TWO MORE HOURS!

ROAAR

SMASH

THE PLANE IN THE MIDDLE MUST HOLD THE COMMANDER!

WHAT THE?!

WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?!

YOU'VE GOTTA STOP DROPPING BOMBS!!

THE VILLAGE AHEAD'S FILLED WITH *GOOD* PEOPLE!

HEY!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

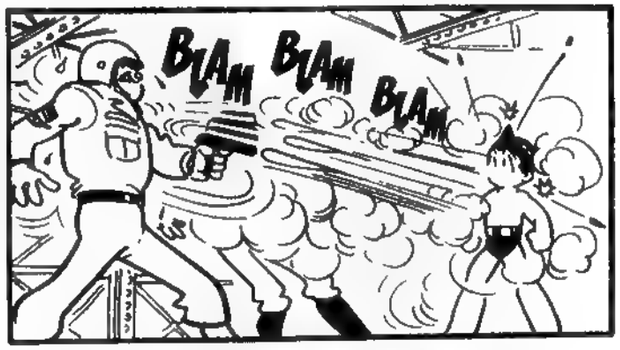
COMMANDER! THIS KID SMASHED A HOLE IN OUR PLANE!

HE SAYS WE SHOULDN'T DROP ANY BOMBS!

IF I TELL THEM I'M A ROBOT, IT'LL MAKE MATTERS WORSE...

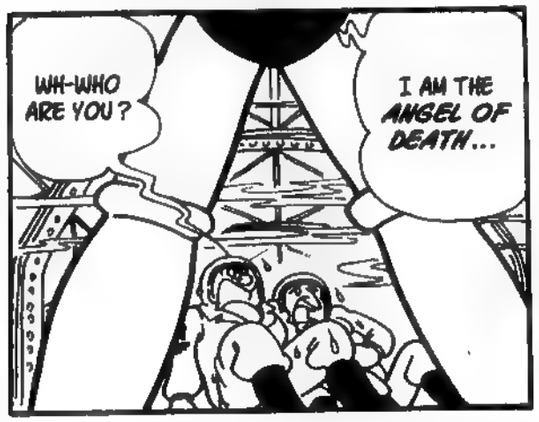
I'LL JUST HAVE TO ACT LIKE A REAL MONSTER...

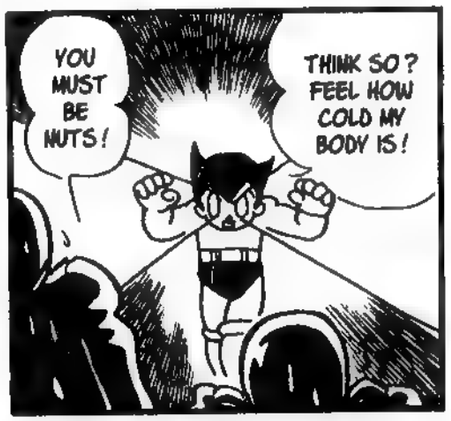

I'VE GOTTA SCARE 'EM REAL GOOD...


BLAM BLAM BLAM


KAZING

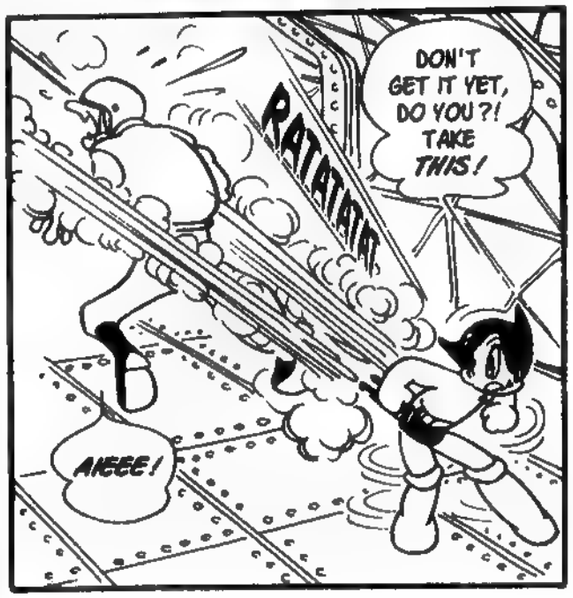

AIEEEE!
FLASH!

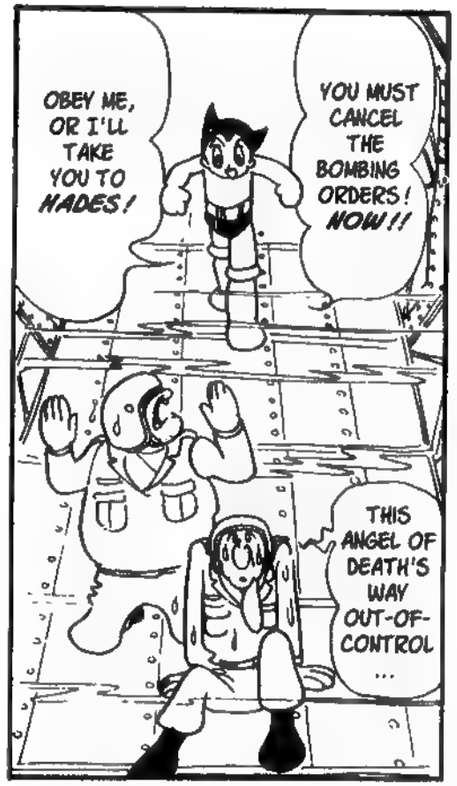

WH-WHO ARE YOU?
I AM THE ANGEL OF DEATH...


YOU MUST BE NUTS!
THINK SO? FEEL HOW COLD MY BODY IS!

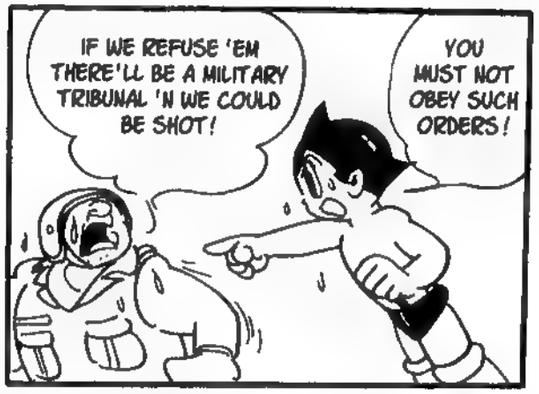

CEASE THIS BOMBING AND RETURN TO BASE, OR TERRIBLE THINGS SHALL BEFALL YOU!


QUICK! INITIATE BOMBING!!
YES-SIR!


RATATATAT
DON'T GET IT YET, DO YOU?! TAKE THIS!
AHEEE!

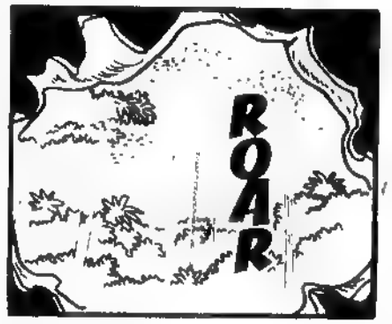

OBEY ME, OR I'LL TAKE YOU TO HADES!
YOU MUST CANCEL THE BOMBING ORDERS! NOW!!
THIS ANGEL OF DEATH'S WAY OUT-OF-CONTROL ...

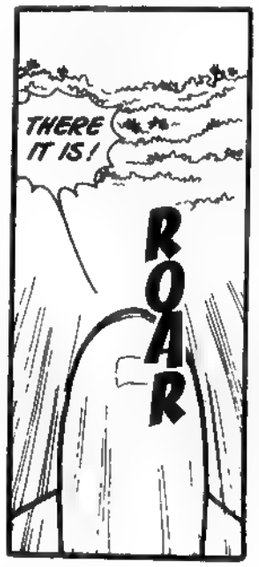

LOOK, WE CAN'T CALL IT OFF!
WE'VE GOT ORDERS FROM HQ!

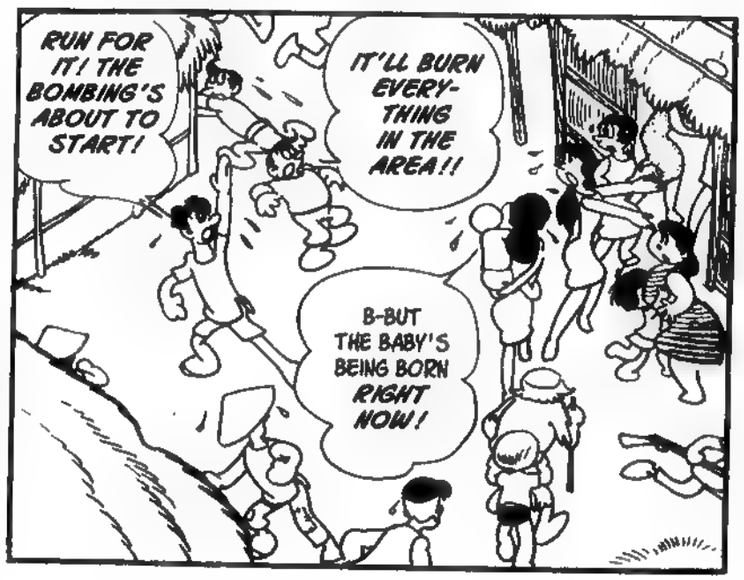

IF WE REFUSE 'EM THERE'LL BE A MILITARY TRIBUNAL 'N WE COULD BE SHOT!
YOU MUST NOT OBEY SUCH ORDERS!


B-BUT I DON'T WANNA BE EXECUTED!


THIS IS TAKING TOO LONG... WE'RE ALMOST AT THE VILLAGE...


ROAR


THERE IT IS!
ROAR


RUN FOR IT! THE BOMBING'S ABOUT TO START!
IT'LL BURN EVERY-THING IN THE AREA!!
B-BUT THE BABY'S BEING BORN RIGHT NOW!

IN TWO MINUTES I'LL SMASH YOUR PLANES, SO BAIL OUT NOW IF YOU WANNA LIVE!

COMMANDER TO ALL PILOTS: EMERGENCY! *BAIL OUT NOW!*

ONLY TWO MINUTES, SIR...

HOW COME WE'RE BAILING OUT ALL OF A SUDDEN?

BEATS ME...

SOMETHING ABOUT AN "ANGEL OF DEATH"...

EVERY-ONE'S BAILED OUT!

MY TURN NEXT!

ONE BOMBER TO ANOTHER!

TAKE *THIS!!*

KA BOOM

THAT'S THREE DOWN!

SMASH

BASH

EGADS! H...HE REALLY *WAS* AN ANGEL OF DEATH!

WHAAAH!

THE BABY'S BORN!

AND IT WAS A SAFE BIRTH!

HOORAY!

LOOK HOW CUTE SHE IS!

WHAT A RELIEF!

WELL, THAT WORKED OUT WELL...

I GUESS I SAVED THE VILLAGE...

B...BUT I'VE ONLY GOT...

THUD

...THREE *MINUTES* LEFT...

...TIL I'M *FINISH-ED*...

I'VE HARDLY GOT ANY POWER LEFT...

I CAN FEEL IT DRAINING AWAY EVERY SECOND...

WHAAAAH

WHAT HAPPENED?

ARE YOU INJURED?

UM ...

NOT REALLY...

IS THE BABY OKAY?

THANKS TO YOU, SHE IS...

HOW PRETTY YOU ARE!

WHAA! WHAAH!

SAY HELLO TO HER...

I'D LOVE TO...

THIS IS THE MYSTERIOUS BOY WHO SAVED OUR VILLAGE, MRS. VO...

THANK YOU... SO MUCH...

HUMAN BABIES ARE SO AMAZING... THEY GROW UP...

?

GROW HEALTHY AND STRONG, LITTLE GIRL... DON'T LET THE WAR STOP YOU!

WHRRR

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'VE ONLY GOT *TWENTY SECONDS* LEFT...

I... I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR...

WHEN I DIE, WRAP ME UP AND GIVE ME TO SOMEONE LEAVING THE VILLAGE. TELL THEM TO SEND ME TO THIS ADDRESS...

I THOUGHT I COULD NEVER LIVE IN THE 20TH CENTURY, BUT YOU'VE GIVEN MY LIFE MEANING, AND I DON'T MIND DYING AMONG YOU NOW...

THUD

IS HE REALLY DEAD?

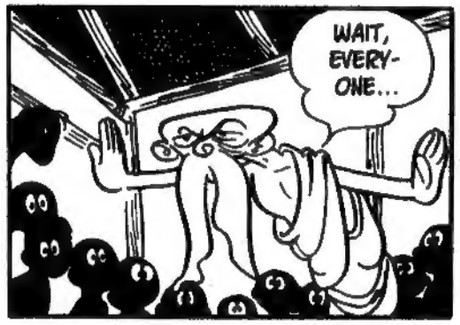
W..WHA? HE... *HE'S NOT HUMAN !!*

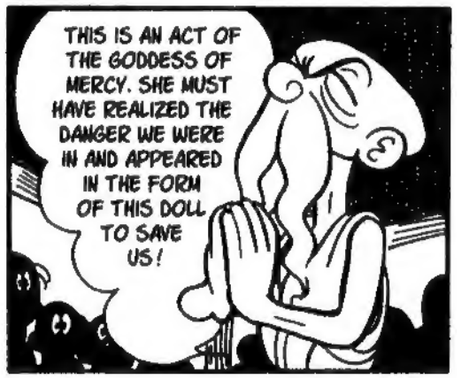
A *DOLL ?!*

NO... SHE'S RIGHT... IT *IS* A DOLL...

BUT HE WAS *ALIVE!*






THIS IS AN ACT OF THE GODDESS OF MERCY. SHE MUST HAVE REALIZED THE DANGER WE WERE IN AND APPEARED IN THE FORM OF THIS DOLL TO SAVE US!









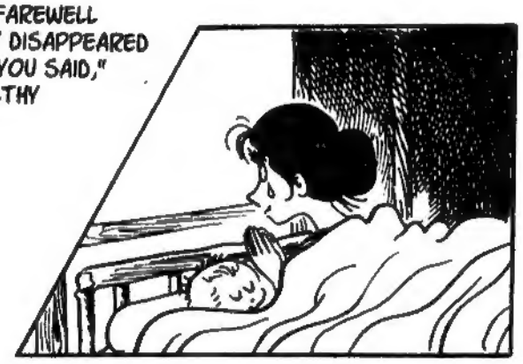




ASTRO WAS THEREUPON WRAPPED TIGHTLY IN WHITE FUNERAL CLOTH. TWO VILLAGERS WERE ELECTED TO PLACE HIS BODY ONTO A CART AND CARRY HIM TO SAIGON. THE WHOLE VILLAGE TURNED OUT TO SAY FAREWELL, THEIR HANDS CLASPED IN RESPECTFUL PRAYER. IT WAS A SOLEMN, ALMOST RELIGIOUS SIGHT, LIKE WITNESSING THE FUNERAL OF A HERO OR GREETING A TRUE SAINT.

THE MOTHER OF THE NEW BABY BID ASTRO FAREWELL FROM HER BED AND WATCHED AS HE SLOWLY DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW. "I SHALL NEVER FORGET WHAT YOU SAID," SHE WHISPERED, "AND I SHALL RAISE A HEALTHY AND STRONG CHILD, DESPITE THE WAR..."

WITH ASTRO ON IT, THE CREAKING AND RATTLING CART THEN FADED FROM SIGHT AMONG THE PALM TREES.





ROAR

BOOOM
VOMP
BOOOM
VOMP

ONLY A DAY LATER...

...THE SAME VILLAGE WAS BOMBED AGAIN.

VOMP
BOOOM
BOOM
BOOM

ALL THE VILLAGERS WERE KILLED...

...INCLUDING THE BABY...

BUT THE PILOTS OF THE BOMBER LATER WORE...

...THAT THEY SAW HUNDREDS, EVEN THOUSANDS, OF LIGHTS SHAPED LIKE ASTRO BOY RISING THROUGH THE SMOKE.

THE PILOTS SAY THE STRANGE LIGHTS SEEMED TO BE ATTACKING THE FORMATION, SO THEY TURNED THEIR PLANES AWAY IN TERROR. THEY WERE NEVER ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE LIGHTS.

ARGH!!

BUDA BUDA BUDA ZIP

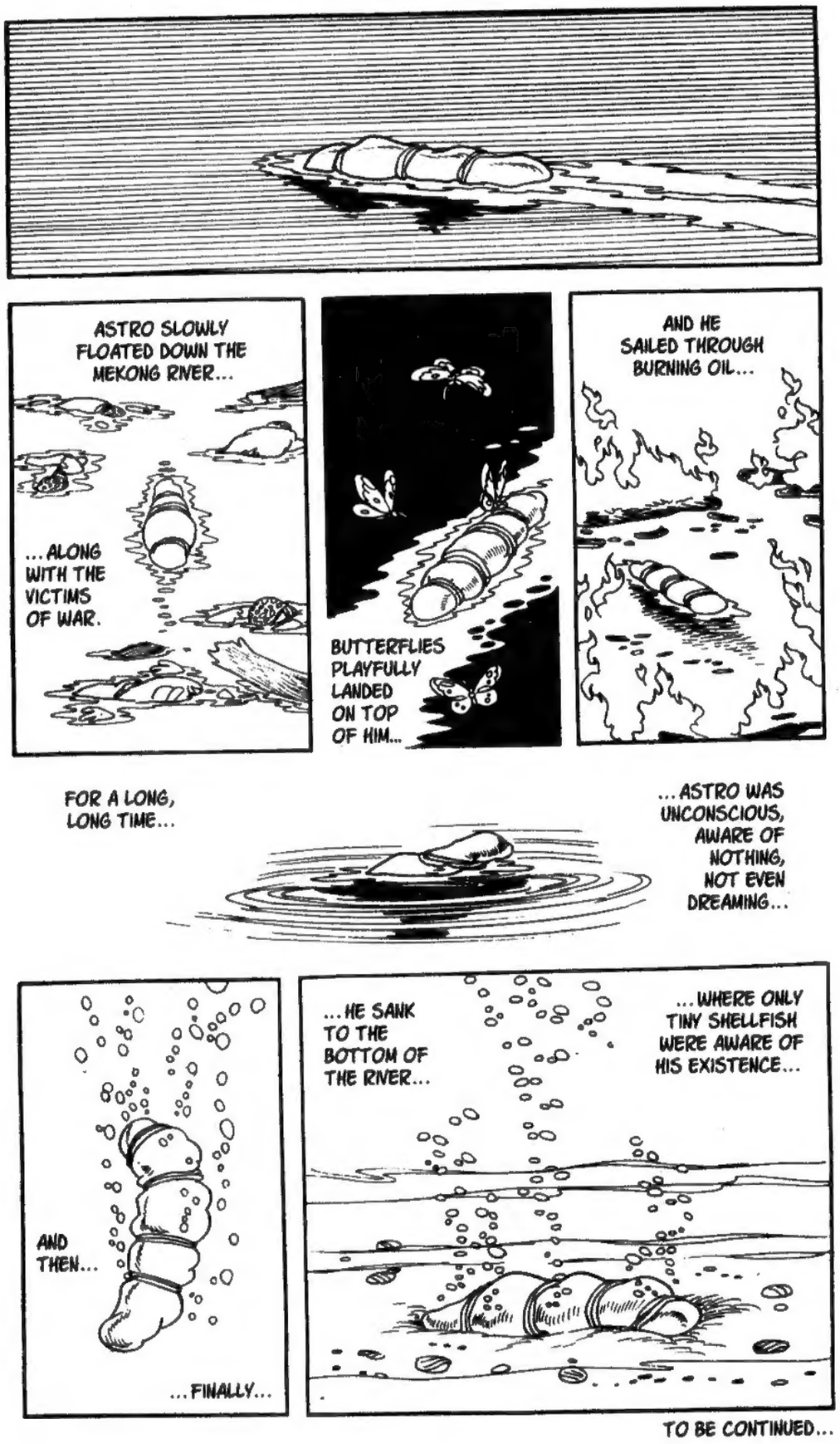
BUDA BUDA BUDA ZIP

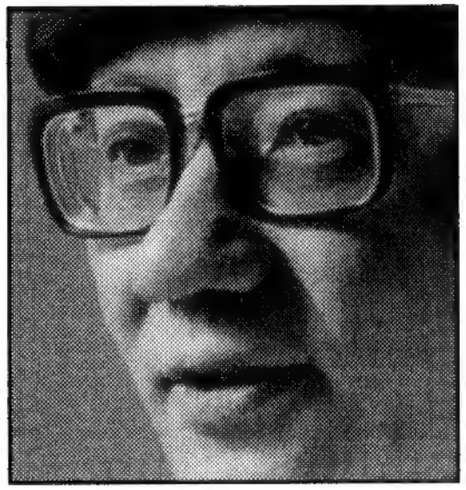
HAALP!

W...WE'VE...GASP!... GOT TO MAKE SURE NO ONE...GETS THIS DOLL...!

W...WE'VE GOTTA PROTECT HIM, IF IT'S THE LAST THING WE DO.. INTO THE RIVER!

SPLASH


ASTRO SLOWLY FLOATED DOWN THE MEKONG RIVER...
...ALONG WITH THE VICTIMS OF WAR.
BUTTERFLIES PLAYFULLY LANDED ON TOP OF HIM...
AND HE SAILED THROUGH BURNING OIL...
FOR A LONG, LONG TIME...
...ASTRO WAS UNCONSCIOUS, AWARE OF NOTHING, NOT EVEN DREAMING...
AND THEN...
...FINALLY...
...HE SANK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER...
...WHERE ONLY TINY SHELLFISH WERE AWARE OF HIS EXISTENCE...
TO BE CONTINUED...



Osamu Tezuka was born in the city of Toyonaka, in Osaka, Japan, on November 3, 1928, and raised in Takarazuka, in Hyogo prefecture. He graduated from the Medical Department of Osaka University and was later awarded a Doctorate of Medicine.

In 1946 Tezuka made his debut as a manga artist with the work *Ama-chan's Diary*, and in 1947 he had his first big hit with *New Treasure Island*. Over his forty-year career as a cartoonist, Tezuka produced in excess of an astounding 150,000 pages of manga, including the creation of *Metropolis*, *Mighty Atom* (a.k.a. *Astro Boy*), *Jungle Emperor* (a.k.a. *Kimba the White Lion*), *Black Jack*, *Phoenix*, *Buddha*, and many more.

Tezuka's fascination with Disney cartoons led him to begin his own animation studio, creating the first serialized Japanese cartoon series, which was later exported to America as *Astro Boy* in 1963. Tezuka Productions went on to create animated versions of *Kimba the White Lion* (*Jungle Emperor*) and *Phoenix*, among others.

He received numerous awards during his life, including the Bungei Shunju Manga Award, the Kodansha Manga Award, the Shogakukan Manga Award, and the Japan Cartoonists' Association Special Award for Excellence. He also served a variety of organizations. He was a director of the Japan Cartoonists' Association, the chairman of the Japan Animation Association, and a member of the Manga Group, Japan Pen Club, and the Japan SF Authors' Club, among others. Tezuka became Japan's "comics ambassador," taking Japan's comics culture to the world. In 1980, he toured and lectured in America, including a speech at the United Nations.

Regarded as a national treasure, Osamu Tezuka died on February 2, 1989 at the age of 60. In 1994, the Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum opened in the city of Takarazuka, where he was raised. His creations remains hugely popular in Japan and are printed in many languages throughout the world, where he is acclaimed as one of the true giants of comics and animation, his work as vital and influential today as it was half a century ago.



"Comics are an international language," Tezuka said. "They can cross boundaries and generations. Comics are a bridge between all cultures."